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T H E S I S

"ORIGIN OF AMERICAN NEGRO FOLKSONGS"

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. Introduction
   1. Statement of the Problem

II. Historical Background of the Negro Folksongs.....2

   1. Evolution of the African dance form.....2

      a. The shout.....2

         (1) Characteristics.....4

   2. Religious Instruction of Negro Slaves.....6

      a. Influence of Religious Instruction on Song Expression.....6

         (1) The Creation of Folksongs.....6

III. Musical Characteristics.....14

   1. Form of the Spiritual.....14

      a. Antiphonal form-basic.....14

         (1) African practices.....14

         (2) Afro-American practices.....18

   2. Melodic Tendencies.....23

      a. Variations from the major scale.....23

      b. Variations from the minor scale.....29

   3. The Harmonic Sense of the American Negroes.....34

      a. Existence of polyphony in early music of South Africa.....34

      b. Existence of polyphony in early American Negro music.....39

   4. Modal Characteristics.....45

   5. Rhythmical Characteristics.....49

IV. Characteristics of Texts.....52

   1. Religious.....52

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https://archive.org/details/originofamerican00cull

a. Religious susceptibility of American Negro.....52

(1) Borrowings from American Hymnody.....57

b. Secular.....66

1c. Poetic Characteristics.....72

V. Summary.....78

Index Of Illustrations

Page

African "Call and Response" Chant forms.....15, 16

"Call and Response" Chant forms of the American Negro

O Every Time I Feel De Spirit.....19

Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray.....20, 21

Diatonic and Pentatonic Scales--illustrated.....23

Negro Folksongs based on the Pentatonic Scale

A Great Campmeetin'.....25

Nobody Knows De Trouble I See.....26

Spirituals containing the raised sixth in minor mode

Come Trembling Down.....30

You May Bury Me In De Eas'.....31

Spirituals containing the Augmented Second

Father Abraham Tell It.....32, 33

Chant of the Mpumuza Chiefs of Natal--in Africa.....37

Interesting Chordal Combinations in Negro Folksongs.....40, 41

Example of "Gliding" in Negro Spirituals.....41

Reversions to--primitive music methods

O Ride On, Jesus.....42

Go Down Moses.....42

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the origin and inner structure of the American Negro Folk-songs.

The first attempts towards discovering and preserving this music were made by pioneer collectors from 1865 to 1875 immediately following the Civil War, all of whom were more or less successful in setting down the melodies correctly. Had it not been for their work, the number of the spirituals recorded and preserved would have been only a fraction of the total.

These investigators found, however, great difficulty in translating into notes all of the sounds heard. This the early collectors attributed to the lack of facilities and to the fact that these elements, uncommon to the European system of music, had undoubtedly sprung from a source or sources other than the American.

As the slaves were of African lineage or descent it was at first assumed that these 'foreign phenomena' were of African origin. This being the first manifestation of any obvious influence on the music of the United States from that continent, little was known about African music practices. Only recently has research been directed into that channel. This new field was studied with the 'Negro Spirituals' in mind and as a result it has aroused the interest of musicologists, who, with adequate equipment, have made many valuable discoveries.

Consequently the African contribution combined with the American constitute an unusual group of songs.

It is this combination, each regarded in its proper place, which will form the basis of discussion. The fact that

there is no consistent development in Negro music as found in established national schools of music, is evident. Therefore the sources of information relied upon are not be be regarded as conclusive but are only to be considered as links in the chain of endeavor for a common and greater understanding of the Negro folksongs that so distinctly portray his racial characteristics.

CHAPTER II

Historical Background of Negro Folksongs

Following the tradition of the folksongs of other peoples the songs of the Negroes' originated from the dance. Theirs was commonly known as the "shout" prevalent between the years 1800--1830.[1] It is called specifically the "ring shout", as the men and women generally arrange themselves alternately in a ring, their bodies quite close. The music starts and the ring begins to move around and around on shuffling feet that do not leave the floor, one foot beating with the heel a decided accent in strict two-four time; the music being supplemented by the clapping of hands. This dance is important for the following reasons: (1) it created the atmosphere so conducive to the production of the spiritual or folk-song and was an ever-present feature in all of the later campmeetings; (2) from it the folksongs are purported to have had their beginnings. Therefore its origin and characteristics are worthy of note.

(1a) The origin of the "shout" in America may be traced to the Creole Patios of Louisiana who found a few songs made up of words in the African Language. There the dialects of the African were wedded to tunes and dance steps.[2]

The famous explorer, Paul B. Chaillu, writing in the seventies of the last century, has described such dances witnessed on the dark continent. One he describes as being performed by men who alternately squat and rise, at the same time repeating the monotonous words "Goom and Zup" throughout the night. Another more nearly fits the description of certain savage dance survivals in the United States well up to the time of the Civil

1. Locke--The Negro and His Music
2. Smith, J. H.--Folksongs of the American Negro

War. In their dancing the drums influenced the natives as martial airs the Frenchman; they lose control over themselves and the louder the drums sounds the wilder are the contortions of the male African.

It tallies with the words of Bescherelle, who describes the "Calinda" as a sort of contra-dance, which has now passed out of use.[1] As Hearn saw the "Calinda" it was danced by men only, stripped to the waist and twirling heavy sticks as in a mock fight.[2]

Another dance allied to the "Calinda" and also performed in Louisiana, is described as a sort of minuet. It is called the "Coonjai". When the "Coonjai" is danced, the music is furnished by a band of singers. The leader is a man selected both for the quality of his voice and for his skill in improvising. He sustains the solo part, while his colleagues afford him an opportunity for inventing some neat verses to compliment some plantation hero. The dancers themselves never sing, and the usual musical accompaniment, besides that of the singers, is furnished by a skillful performer on the barrel-head-drum, the jaw-bone and the key, or some other rude instrument.[3]

The barbaric dances were intimately connected with the primitive Negro worship--a disappearing characteristic of an older culture. It is said that even in the "Calinda" the invocation "Aie! Aie!" Voodoo Maignon!" was occasionally heard when the frenzy was at its height!

From just such dances as these the shouts of the more

1. Krehbiel--Afro-American Folksongs
2. Ibid
3. Smith, J.H.--Folksongs of the American Negro

Eastern Negro of the South have descended. Protestant influence--Baptist and Methodist prevalent about 1800 on the plantations-toned them down. Thus in the course of time the dance, composed in honor of Voodoo or Hoodoo, was identified with the worship of Christ, the meaning of the African words as its accompaniment being so far forgotten as to make them unintelligible even to the dancer himself. One by one the African words were dropped to make way for the more understandable dialect of the white American.[1]

The "shout" or "dishevelled dance" as it is called by Mr. Tiersot, flourished in the days of slavery chiefly in South Carolina and in the states south of it.[2] "It appears to be found in Florida," says Mr. Allen in his preface to "Slave Songs," "but not in North Carolina or Virginia." "And the term shouting was used in Virginia in reference to a peculiar motion of the body not wholly unlike the Carolina shouting."

1a (1) The true shout takes place on Sundays or on "praise nights" through the week, and either in the praise-house or in some cabin in which a regular religious meeting had been held. Very likely more than half the population of a plantation is gathered together. Let it be the evening, and a light wood fire burns red before the door of the house and on the hearth. For some time one can hear the vociferous exhortation or a prayer of the presiding elder, or by the brother who has a gift of petition. The formal meeting being over, the benches are pushed

1. Smith, J. H.--Folksongs of the American Negro
2. Tiersot, Julien M.--"La Musique Chez Les peuples Indiginenes du Amerique du Nordi"

back to the wall, and old and young, men and women, all stand up in the middle of the floor and when the spiritual is struck up, begin walking first, by and by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, twitching motion which agitates the entire shoulder and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Some times the dance is silent, some times the song itself is also sung by the dancers. But more frequently a band composed of some of the best singers stands at the side of the room to "bass" the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or striking their knees. Song and dance are extremely energetic, and often the shout lasts into the middle of the night.[1]

A secular parody of it can easily be recalled by all persons who remember the old-fashioned minstrel shows where it was perpetuated in the so-called "walk-around" of the minstrels.

There are no evidences of songs from this period; if so, they were not understandable. The rhythmic element was of prime importance. This was due to the fact that the Negro was still untrained religiously and educationally. He had not yet come in contact with the two most vital factors largely responsible for his songs. His habits, religious and musical, were more or less his own affair, though the influence of his new environment had begun to make its impressions; specifically in

1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folk-songs (P.33)

the case of the restraining of religious barbaric dances--resulting in a much milder form--the shout.

(2a) The movement for the serious religious training of the Negroes was begun in South Carolina by Bishop Capers of the Methodist church in the year 1821 and was generally adopted in South Carolina in the year 1829.[1] Proscribed during their first years in the New World, this popular sect, as well as the Baptist, had finally won the ear of the Negroes by their emotional preaching, hymn-singing, etc. Catholics, Quakers, and Presbyterians, equally interested, failed to win many converts because, for the imported African, their religious expression was too ritualistic.

The Negro took complete refuge in Christianity. Far from his native land and customes, despised by those among whom he lived, experiencing the pang of the separation of loved ones on the auction block, knowing the hard task master, feeling the lash, the Negro seized Christianity; the religion of compensations in the life to come for the ills suffered in the present existence, the religion which implied the hope that in the next world there would be a reversal of conditions, of rich man and poor man, of proud and meek, of master and slave. At the psychic moment there was at hand the precise religion for the condition into which he found himself thrust. The result was a body of songs voicing all of the cardinal virtues of Christianity-patience-forbearance-love-faith and hope, through a necessarily modified form of primitive African music.[2]

2a (1) This is the beginning of the folksong period 1830--1850.[3] The songs were now more or less understandable,

1. White, N. I.--American Negro Folksongs
2. Work--The Book of American Negro Spirituals
3. Locke--The Negro and His Music

melody was preferable to mere rhythm and unintelligible words as were exhibited in the use of the shout. They were defined as the 'spontaneous outbursts' of intense religious fervor growing (1) out of the Negro's own religious services, or (2) out of the scene of some real-life experience during work or leisure hours.

The religious services from which the songs grew have been described by such prominent writers as Higginson, Hallin, Burlin. Their testimonies are as follows:

Natalie Curtis Burlin in actual visitation to one of the camp-meeting reports--"The mutterings, the ejaculations grew louder and more dramatic till suddenly I felt the "creative thrill" shoot through the people like an electric vibration, then some audible hum arose, emotion was gathering atmosphere as clouds gather, and up from the depth of some sinners' remorse and imploring came a pitiful little plea, a "real Negro moan", sobbed in a musical cadence. From somewhere in that lower gathering another voice improvised a response, the plea sounded again, louder this time and more impassioned, the other voices joined in the answer shaping it into a musical phrase, and so before our eyes, as one might say, from the molten metal of music a new song was smithied out, composed then and there by no one in particular and by everyone in general."[1]

Colonel Higginson further reports that often in the starlit evening he has returned from some lonely ride by the swift river or on the plover-haunted-barrens, and entering the swamp, has silently approached some glimmering fire round which the dusky

1. Burlin, N.C.--Negro Folksongs

figures moved in rhythmical barbaric dance, the Negroes call a "shout", chanting often harshly but always in the most perfect time, some monotonous refrain. Writing in the darkness he would get the words and take them down to the music that he had retained in his ear. "A favorite one," he writes, and the simplest primitive type in his collection is the following example:

Hold your light
Hold your light Brudder Robert
Hold your light
Hold your light on Canaan's shore
What makes ole Satan for follow me so?
Satan ain't got nothin' for do wid me.
Hold your light
Hold your light on Canaan's shore.[1]

J. Miller McKim in his address in Samson Hall in Philadelphia, Pa.--July 9, 1862, said, "I asked one of these blacks--a very intelligent one where they got these songs." He replied, "Dey make 'em,sah." How do they make them? I'll tell you, its dis' way! "My master call me up and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lashes. When dey come to praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it. Somes very good singers and know how, and dey work it in 'till dey get it right; dats de way deys made." "A very satisfactory explanation," continues Mr. McKim.[2]

The songs 'composed' by individuals during work and leisure hours and communicated to the group--a simple outgrowth of the circumstances also afford interesting examples. These individuals were known to compose on the moment, mixing

1.Higginson--Negro Spirituals
2.Allen, Ware, Garrison--Slave Songs of the U.S.

all sorts of songs together with the ideas that arose; the survival of a custom prevalent in their native land. The well-known spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" is reported to have had similar origins of just such 'communal nature' in Africa and America.

The late Bishop Frederick Fisher of Calcutta, India, returning from Rhodesia in Central Africa related that he had heard the natives sing a melody so closely resembling "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" that he felt he had found it in its original form. Moreover, the subject was identical. The tribe of natives that inhabit the region near the great Victoria Falls have a custom from which the song arose. When one of their chiefs, in the old days, was about to die, he was placed in a great canoe together with the trappings that marked his rank, and food for his journey. The canoe was set afloat in midstream headed toward the great Falls and the vast column of mist that rises from them. Meanwhile the tribe on the shore would sing its chant of farewell. The legend is that on one occasion the King was seen to rise in his canoe at the very brink of the falls and enter a chariot that, descending from the mists, bore him aloft. This incident gave rise to the words 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' and the song, brought to America from Africa long ago became anglicized and modified by the Christian faith.[1]

In America the evolution of this song was reported as follows by Mrs. Maude-Cuney Hare: "The song arose from an incident which happened to a woman being sold from a Mississippi Plantation to Tennessee. Rather than be separated from her child,

1. Fisher, Wm. Arms--Seventy Negro Spirituals

she was about to drown herself and little one in the Cumberland River when she was prevented by an old Negro woman, who exclaimed, "Wait, let de chariot of de Lord swing low and let me take de Lords' scroll and read it to you." The heart-broken mother became consoled and so was reconciled to the parting.[1]

The songs of secular character likewise originated from various life-situations. They were always referred to as spirituals by the slaves. Only a few have been collected, the religious songs being greater in number. The secular songs differ from the religious songs chiefly in their text in the early period of their production; their style and general musical peculiarities are the same, so an extensive study of them, separately, is unnecessary. Only recently have they degenerated into the popular musical idioms of the day, becoming distinctly different from the religious class of songs. Colonel Higginson devoted much time to the study of the secular songs in their early period. "I always wondered about these," he said, "whether they had a conscious and definite origin in some leading mind, or whether they grew by gradual accretion in an almost unconscious way," While being rowed across Beaufort to Ladies' Is. one day he asked an oarsman, a brisk young fellow how these songs were made. "Some good spirituals are jes' start out of curiosity. "I been a-raise a sing myself once." 'Once we boys," he said, "went for tote some rice, and de darkie driver he keep a-callin' on us; and I say, "O, de ole darkie driver!" Den anuder said, "Fust ting my mommy told me was notin'

1. Hare, M. C.--Negro Musicians and Their Music

so bad as a darkie driver. Then he began singing, and the men after listening a moment joined in the chorus as if it were an old acquaintance though they evidently had not heard it before. "I saw," said Col. Higginson, "how easily a new "sing" took root among them, out of which originated new songs; intimate experiences of Negro folk." This song was the result.

O, de ole Darkie-driver
Fust ting my mommy tell me,
O gwine away!
Darkie-driver second devil
O gwine away!
Knock he down, and spoil he labor
O gwine away!

The Negroes drew on many sources for their songs, namely; (1) Africa from which a few of the American Negro folksongs are said to have evolved--the example Swing Low,Sweet Chariot, being one of the most outstanding. Some think this African element negligible. Dr. Lorenzo K. Turner who has devoted much study to those indigeneous African sources contends that survivals are numerous. Edw. King in his book of Negro songs, "The Great South" writes--a gentleman visitor at Port Royal is said to have been struck with the resemblance of some of the tunes sung by the water-men to boatmen's songs he had heard on the Nile. Marion Holland, in his Autobiography related a similar coicidence in the chapter entitled "The Old African Church", (Richmond, Va.)--as he sat down the audient arose, as one woman improvised a funeral chant.

We'll pass over Jordan
O my brothers, O my sisters
De waters' chilly and cold
But hallelujah to de Lamb,
Honor de Lamb my children,
Honor de Lamb.

This was sung over and over with upraised arms. "More than 30 years after the sermon of which I have written, our little party of American travellers drew back against the wall of the reported

"house of Simon the Tanner" in Joppa (the ancient Joppa) to let a funeral porcession pass. The dead man, borne without a coffin upon the shoulders of four gigantic Nubians, was of their race. Two-thirds of the crowds that trudged bare footed through the muddy streets behind the bier were of the same nationality, and as they plodded through the mire they chanted the identical wild, wailing measures familar to them from infancy which was sung that Sunday afternoon to the words "We'll pass over Jordan"--even to the oft-reiterated refrain "Honor, my children, honor de Lamb." The air was identical, likewise the rhythm and intonations, only the gutterals were different.[1]

Dr. Turner, relates that he learned a song on the islands of Charleston, S.C. which when sung before African students at the University of London was immediately familiar to them. They actually sang the song with him.[2]

(2) In America the hymns were lined out to the Negroes in their religious services. They utilized them freely--in their own way. As all of the songs were learned by ear, their meanings were often changed, therefore straying into wholly new versions. Examples are "Old Time Religion", "Where are the Hebrew Children", etc.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the American Negro folk-songs were a result of both their African heritage and their American associations. Beginning with the shout--a modified African dance--existing in its original form among the Creoles in Louisiana--it was found that it took on a new meaning when brought in contact with Christianity--

1. Work, J. W.--American Negro Songs
2. Ibid

identifying itself with the worship of Christ. The folksong, a result, though bound-up in the newly acquired religious principles, drew on many of the 'tune sources of his native Africa that remained in his 'unconscious memory'. He even used the hymn-tunes and other song material that he picked up on the Southern plantations according to the dictates of his inner racial heritage.

This chapter aims to show ways in which the Negro has built up his vast collection of folk-song material. Some of these practices are still prevalent today.

CHAPTER III

Musical Characteristics

The structure of the folksongs of the American Negro--in their formal, melodic, and harmonic content--exemplifies further the interrelation of the African and American influences.

1a (1) The antiphonal form is used by the Negroes in Africa and America. The uses and characteristics are the same. It is designated as the "call and response chant form". Its feature is a melodic fragment sung repeatedly by the chorus as an answer to the challenging lines of the leader which usually change.[1]

The prevalence of this form in Africa among the natives there possibly explains the Negroes' preference for it in America.

Mrs. Merlin Ennis, a missionary in Angola, Africa, reports that there the singing was in this same style, the chorus answering the lines of the leader.

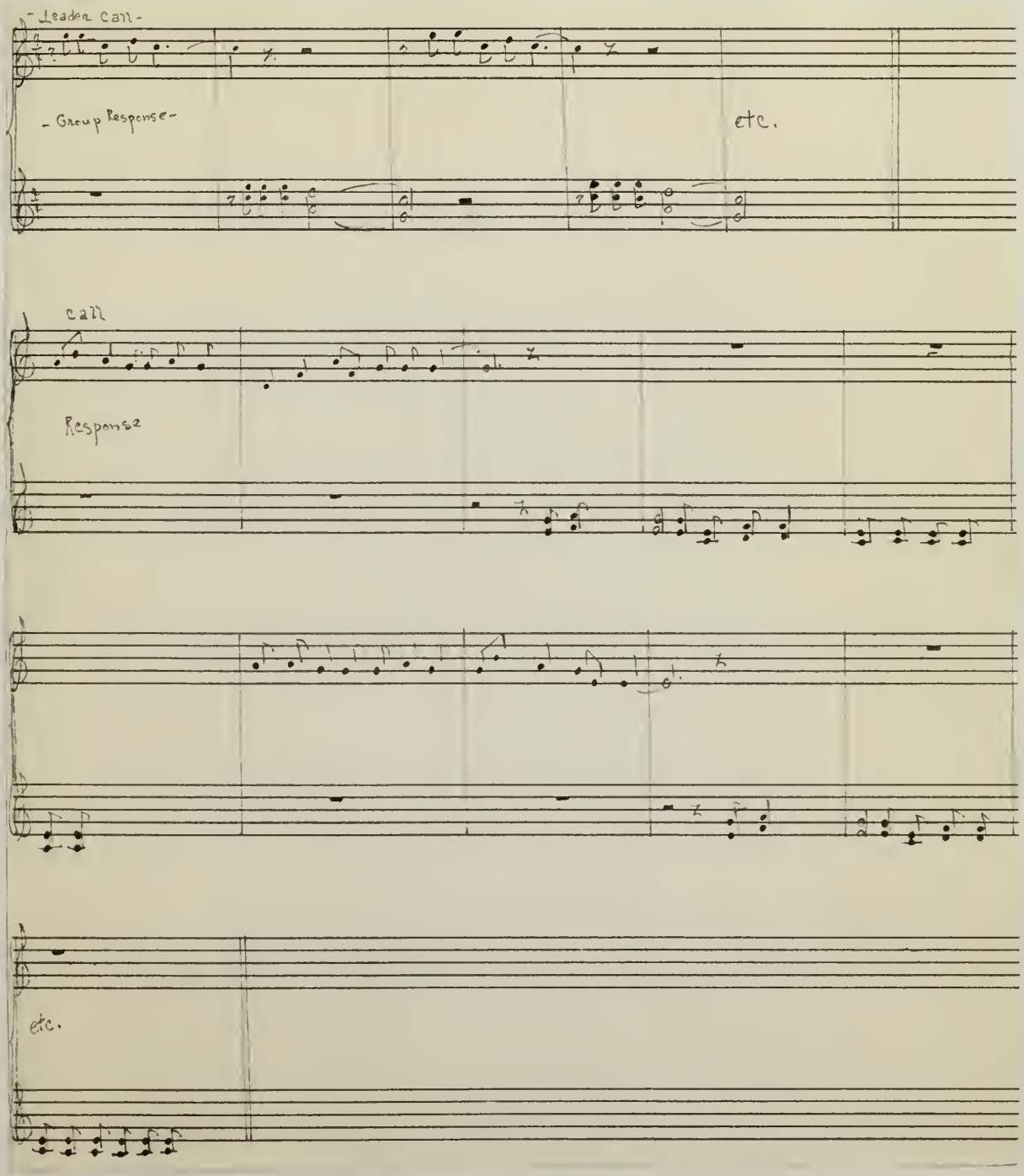
Dr. E. M. Hornbostel, anthropologist, in an article, "African Negro Music", also gives an account of the "call and response chant form" of singing by the natives.

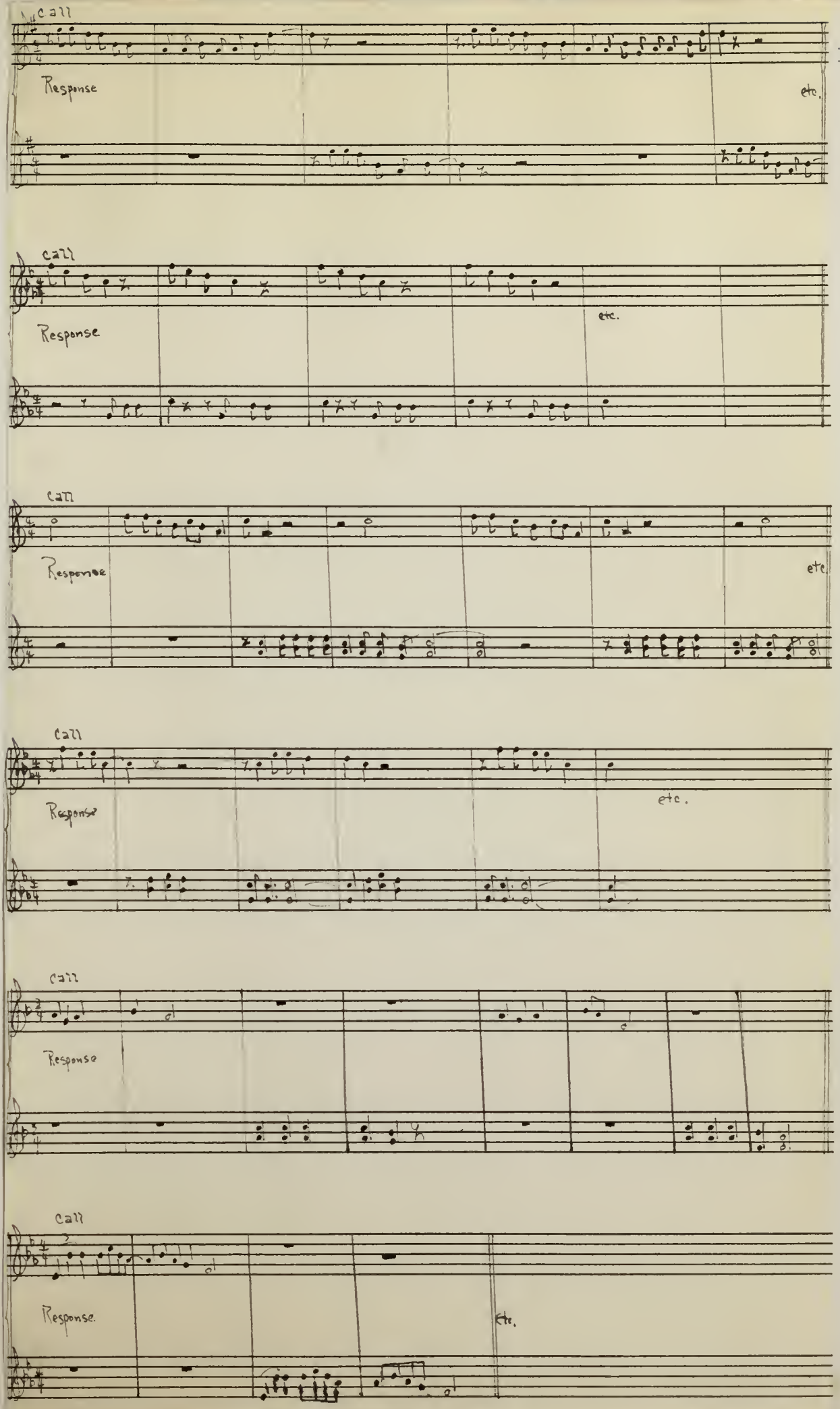
Krehbiel quotes words of an African song in which every new line is answered by the line, "Oh, the broad spears", the new lines undoubtedly sung by a leader and the answering lines by the chorus.[2]

As further evidence, the following examples taken from a collection of songs sung by Liberian natives on

1. Work, J. W.--American Negro Songs
2. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs

phonograph recordings owned by Dr. Chas. S. Johnson and those sung by Zulu natives owned by Dr. Thomas E. Jones are given. The response, it is observed, is identical with the call.




Call
Response
etc.
Call
Response
etc.
Call
Response
etc.
Call
Response
etc.
Call
Response
Call
Response.
etc.

A characteristic African practice is to have the soloist begin the song; he may have been a priest or shaman (in the ceremonial and pagan religious songs.) Naturally if the song is a new one, the initiative is taken by the leader; otherwise the chorus or choruses may begin.

The leader may vary the order of the lines of the text at will. The music mirrors life's experience, having to do with as wide a range of subjects, small and great, as life itself. This helps to explain why the music is improvised; and when a chorus lends it support, or when there is more than one improvisor, it takes on a communal origin and significance. If one improvisor becomes tired, another may take over the function of the poet. Current events serve as convenient grist for the mill. The literary types of these songs which have been preserved range all the way from lyric elegiac, epic, dramatic and worksongs on the one hand, to incantations, songs to animals and to spirits on the other. Among the Ba-Rongas, Junod noted such songs, as: a complaint of the childless woman, the complaint of a Nkuna boy beaten by his masters, the stones are very hard (i.e., to break), songs of love, death, mourning, war, the chase, of the play and dance, and one used to drive away the grasshoppers.[1]

Mrs. Burlin quotes a song (Chindau) inspired by the news of work "Money in Kamben"; others grew out of such homely experiences as hunting a cow, or digging out porcupines

1. Burlin, N.C.--Negro Folksongs (Bk. II)

from the garden and killing them; still another from the dwarfs in W. Africa--"The whiteman is a good man,gives the Abanga salt"; in others the mention of cattle plays an important part.

While the antiphonal song thus plays a vital part in African life and is a sociological source of no mean value, at the same time its very impromptu character, and the fact that it grows out of, and is molded by, life situations and is often of communal origin, makes such things as proportion, and balance in form-matters of secondary consequence.[1]

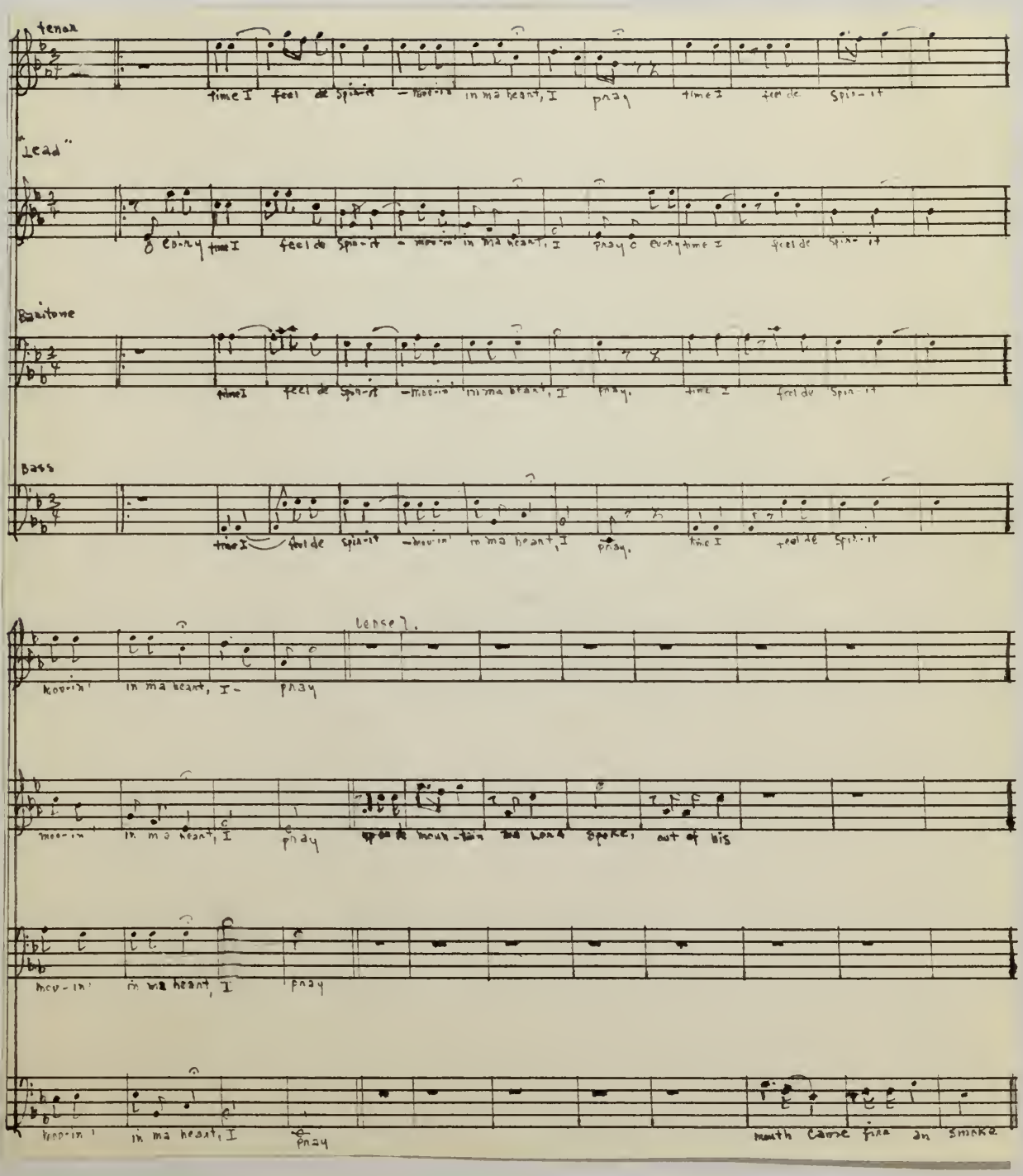
1a (2) In America, for the Negro, the antiphonal form was also the large and flexible mold through which he musicalized his experiences; exemplified clearly in his religious and work-songs. And as though to guard against the loss of such a vehicle, circumstances early acquainted the slave with the practice in his masters' church of "lining out" the hymn, a practice which resembles the African form sufficiently to act as a convenient jog to a short racial memory. If the African songs in their form reflect the straggling luxuriance of the wilderness, the Aframerican songs tend to gain in beauty by a closer knitting together of parts into more formal, well-balanced structure. The simple antiphon between solo and chorus is still the fundamental type, yet new varieties which are also hard to classify

1. Laubenstein--Race Values in Afro-American Music (Mus. Quarterly, N.Y., 16: 378-403: 1930)

tend to develop spontaneously according to no law but the inspiration of the moment.

The following are examples of spirituals in this form.

-O Every Time I Feel de Spirit-



-Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray-

Chorus

Tenor: O- Lord! O, 'way down yon-der by my-self,

"Lead" I Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray; O 'way down yon-der by my-self

Baritone: Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray; O 'way down yon-der by my-self,

Bass: Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray; O 'way down yon-der by my-self,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, O- Lord! O, 'way down yon-der

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, O Lord! Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, O, 'way down yon-der

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, Could-n't hear no-bod- pray, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, O, 'way down yon-der

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray 'way down yon-der

fine

-ad lib. expressivo-

by my-self, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray. In de val-ley, Chilly wa-ters, Hal-le lu-yah! on ma In de Troubles

by my-self, Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray. Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

by my-self Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray. Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

by my-self Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray. Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Knee
Jordan
Cover

With ma Dur-den
Cros-'in over
In de Kingdom

An' ma
In-to
With ma

Cont

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Sav-ior
Ca-naan,
Je-sus

lord

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray,

Could-n't hear no-bod-y pray

This form is found in many other spirituals, they are namely: (1) "Good News, Chariots Comin'" an expanded form, alternating antiphonal solo and chorus employing different verses; (2) "Arise, Shine"; "March On", and alternation of antiphonal solo and refrain, with a regular chorus; (3) "Great Camp-meeting", alternating solo and refrain with a second solo and chorus.

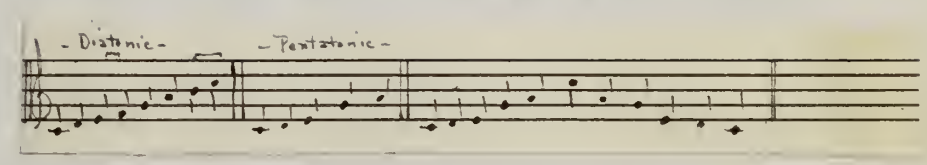
The unconscious art of the Negro created various patterns, but the one common feature, the antiphonal form, remained.

2a. Of the 331 major songs analyzed by Mr. Krehbiel, twenty or a trifle more than one-sixteenth, have a flat seventh; seventy-eight, or one fourth have no seventh, and forty-five, or nearly one seventh have no fourth. The fourth and seventh being tones which are lacking in the pentatonic scale, the songs without one or the other of the tones, approaching the pentatonic songs in what may be called their psychological effect.[1]

These tones, the fourth and seventh of the diatonic major series seem particularly rebellious to the Negroes' sense of intervallic propriety. Of the total 527 Negro folksongs analyzed by Mr. Krehbiel, 111 are built on the pentatonic series. Curtis Burlin also notes the prevalence of this, the five-tone or pentatonic scale, among Negroes.[2] If one comes upon a group of colored men unconsciously humming or whistling at work most often it is the five-tone scale that utters their musical thoughts.

For purposes of comparison the two scales are here given:

Consists of five whole tones and two semitones; seven diff. intervals octave considered as prime added to show the second semitone	Lacks fourth and seventh; no diatonic semitones, instead there are two minor thirds.



Regarding the scale Mr. Engel reports: "There is no doubt that children in their first attempts to sing our diatonic

1. Krehbiel, H.E.--Afro-American Folksongs
2. Burlin, N.C.--American Negro Folksongs

scale find a difficulty in producing the semi-tone from the interval of the third to the fourth, and they are apt to skip from the third at once to the fifth, omitting the fourth altogether. Now this is exactly a pentatonic succession of intervals which impresses itself upon the musically uncultivated mind all the more easily because it is especially melodious as well as characteristic. Indeed the melodic possibilities of the pentatonic scale, containing a charm absolutely peculiar to that scale, instead of being limited, seem almost endless.[1]

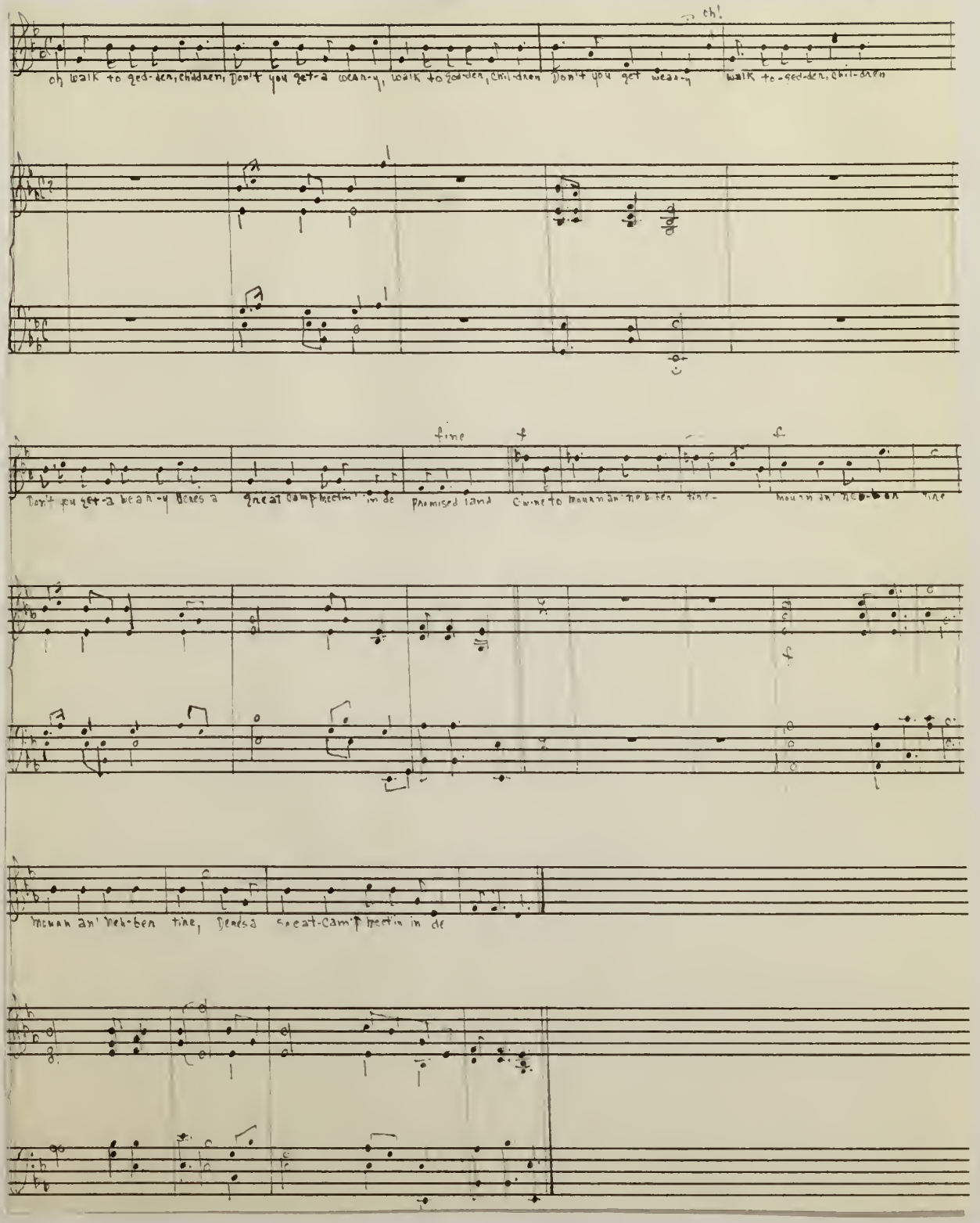
That the scale is found in the music of other peoples is evident. Of the African melodies, Coleridge-Taylor in his book of pianoforte transcriptions entitled "Twenty-four Negro Melodies" has recorded the "Melody of the Warriors' Song" from the Ba Ronga country, which is built on the pentatonic scale. The popular music of China, Japan, Scotland, and Siam also rest upon this scale; and Mr. Krehbiel has further cited examples of it in the music of the American Indians.

Thus the leaning of the American Negro towards the pentatonic scale is not surprising when one considers their African heritage, the likely melodic tendencies of most peoples musically uneducated (pointed out by Mr. Engel) and the possible associations of the Negro with Scottish and Indian music on the South plantations. The following are examples of Negro songs based

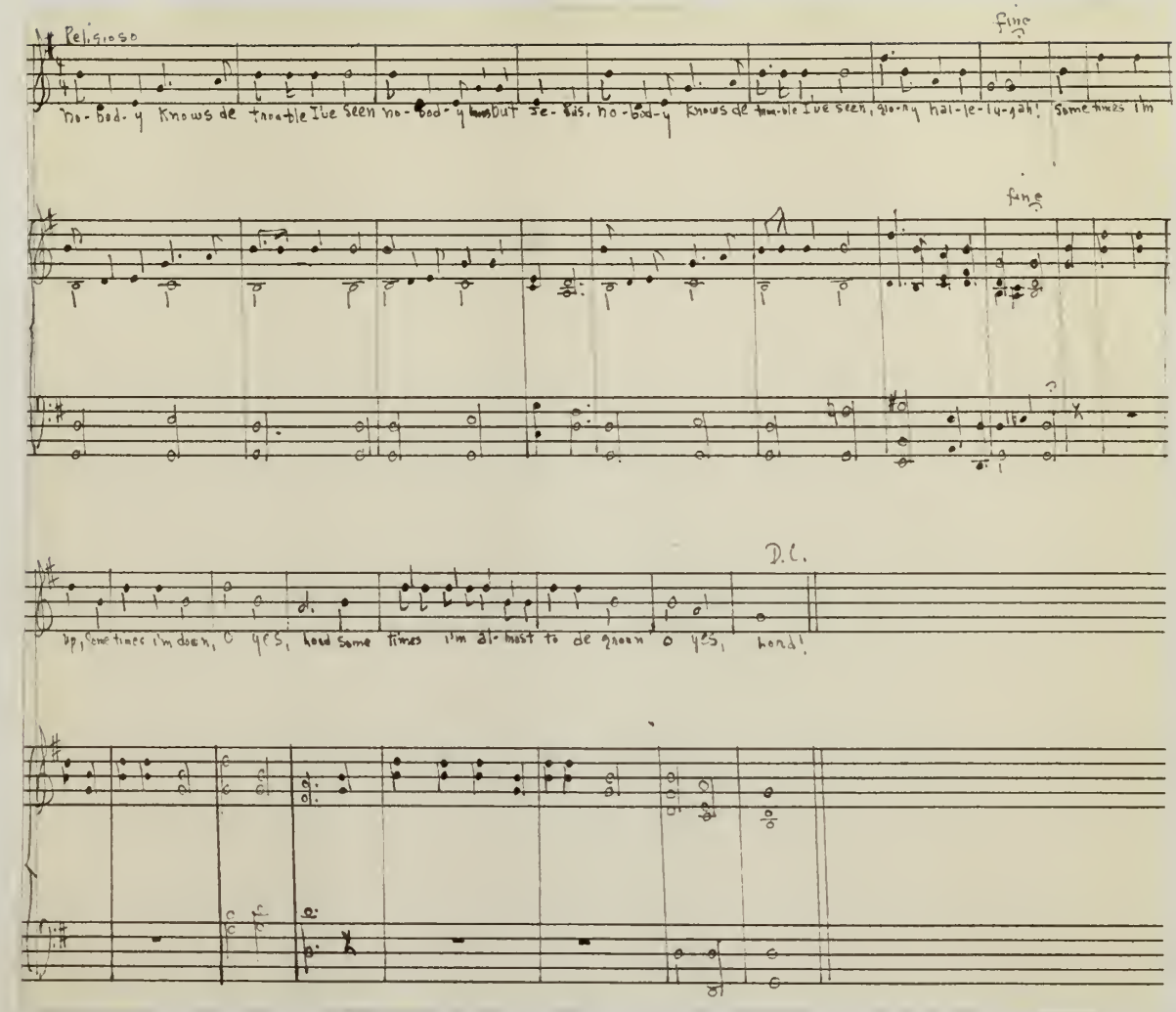
1. Engel--Primitive Music

on the pentatonic scale:

-A Great Campmeetin'-



-Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen-



--An example of a melody in the pentatonic scale without the fourth and seventh--

The testimonies of collectors touching some of the other aberrant intervals and reasons for many mistakes in the recording of them are given: "It is difficult," said Miss McKim, "to express the entire character of the Negro ballads by mere musical notes and signs. The odd turns made in the throat and the curious rhythmic effects produced by singing voices chiming in at different irregular intervals seem almost as impossible to place on the score as the singing of birds or the tones of an Aeolian harp". A typical example of this is that which approaches as nearly possible a flat seventh, in "Great Camp Meetin'", and "Hard Trials". "This tone," reports Mr. Fenner, "is variable in pitch, ranging through an entire interval on different occasions, according to the inspiration of the singer. It is rarely discordant, and even adds a charm to the performance."[1]

The use of the flat seventh in folksongs has had many theories. Many years ago the Rev. Dr. Wentworth, the editor of "The Ladies' Repository", who had been a missionary in China, told of congregations becoming singularly and unaccountably dissonant at certain places in every hymn-tune adopted from the Methodist hymnal. Mr. Krehbiel reported that the Chinese, while admitting the theoretical existence of the fourth and seventh intervals of the diatonic scale, spurned them in practice, and asked whether or not they had been the troublesome tunes, Dr. Wentworth replied, "This explains everything". Mr. Krehbiel further relates that it is certainly conceivable that centuries of habit might atrophy the musical faculty of a people so as to

1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs

make the production of a tone as part of an intervallic system difficult and lead to its modification when occasion calls for its introduction; and makes the assumption that it is not unlikely that the flat seventh of the major scale in the music of the American Negroes may thus be accounted for.

Miss Mildred J. Hill, of Louisville, who gathered a striking collection of songs from the singing of an old woman, a former slave in Boyle County, Ky., noted carefully all deviations from just intonation, and from her songs, came to the conclusion that the Negroes were prone to intervallic aberrations, not only in the case of the seventh, but also in the case of the third; a common phenomenon in folk-music.

The composer, Spohr, likewise observed that rural people intone the third rather sharp, and the fourth still sharper.

He brings to mind the fact that vagaries of this kind emphasize the fact that the diatonic scale, i.e., the tempered scale, used in artistic music, is a scientific evolution, and not altogether a product of nature, as some persons assume, consequently attributing the slightest fractional variation from its tones to exquisite appreciation of tonal differences.

This helps to explain the frequent aberrations found in folksongs of the American Negro, who during his greatest period of song creation spent his life on the South cotton plantations untouched by civilization.

2b. The variations from the minor scale inclose the major seventh, the leading tone, the use of the major sixth and the absence of the sixth, i.e., these are more pronounced than the others and do justify their being put down.

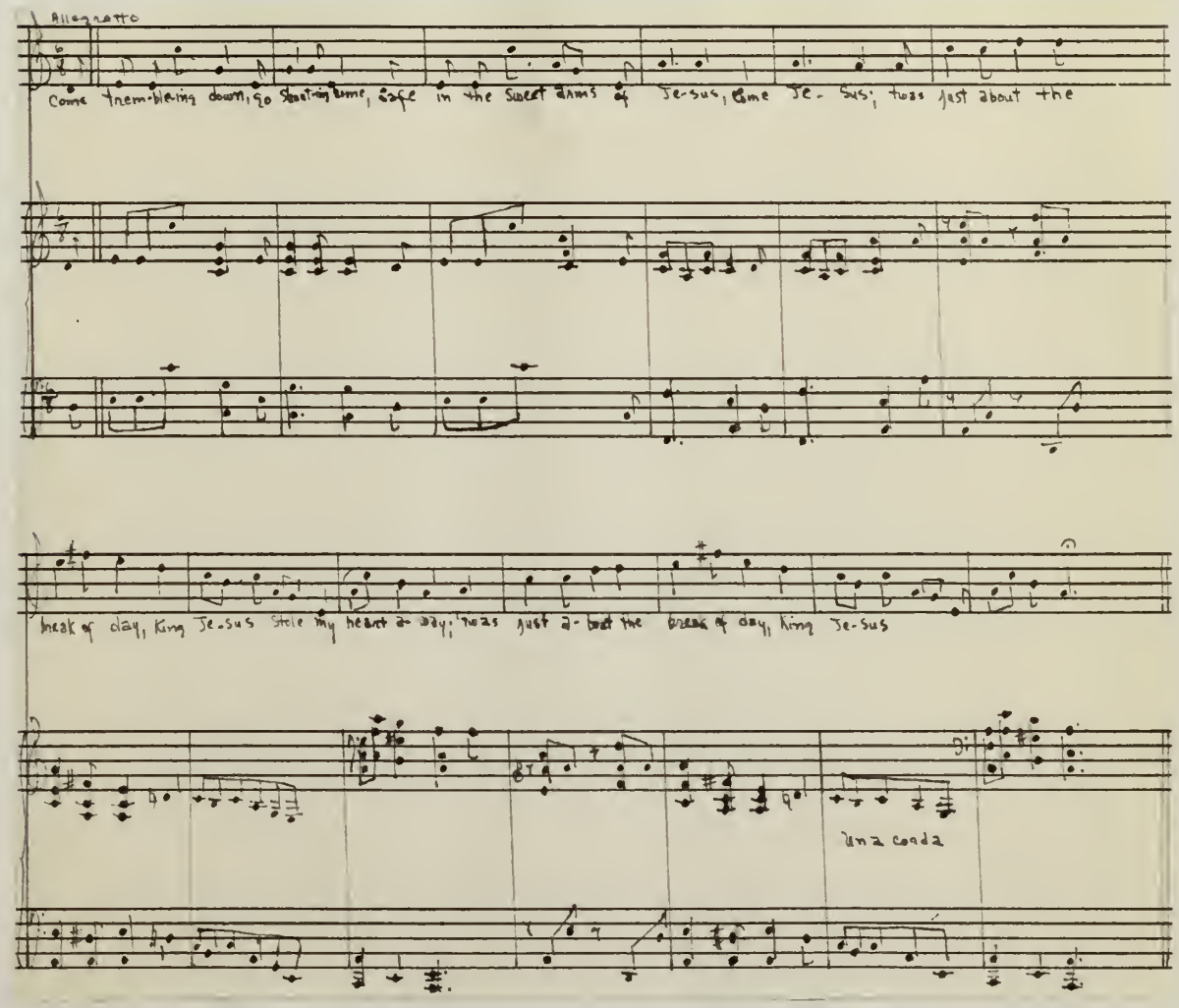
Of the sixty-two minor songs found by Mr. Krehbiel,[1] nineteen contain the leading tone or major seventh. There is no special significance to the prevalence of this interval other than the fact that the influence of the European system is shown in which the seventh step of the minor scale is arbitrarily raised a semi-tone for the sake of a satisfactory harmonic cadence.

The interval of the sixth in minor however presents quite a different situation. The Negroes deviated from the conventional way in which European theorists dealt with it, who, to avoid the abnormal interval of a second consisting of three semi-tones raised the sixth, thus obtaining the ascending minor scale known as the melodic minor. In thirty-four out of sixty-two minor melodies the troublesome sixth is omitted entirely, and in eight it is raised to a major interval without disturbing the seventh. Mr. Krehbiel reports, that the major sixth with the leading tone, in the minor mode, presents itself as an independent melodic element, the effect of which is most potently felt when it is unharmonized. Other minor tunes containing the major sixth, without the leading tone, present a physiological effect which is even more striking than the flat seventh in the major tunes.

1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs

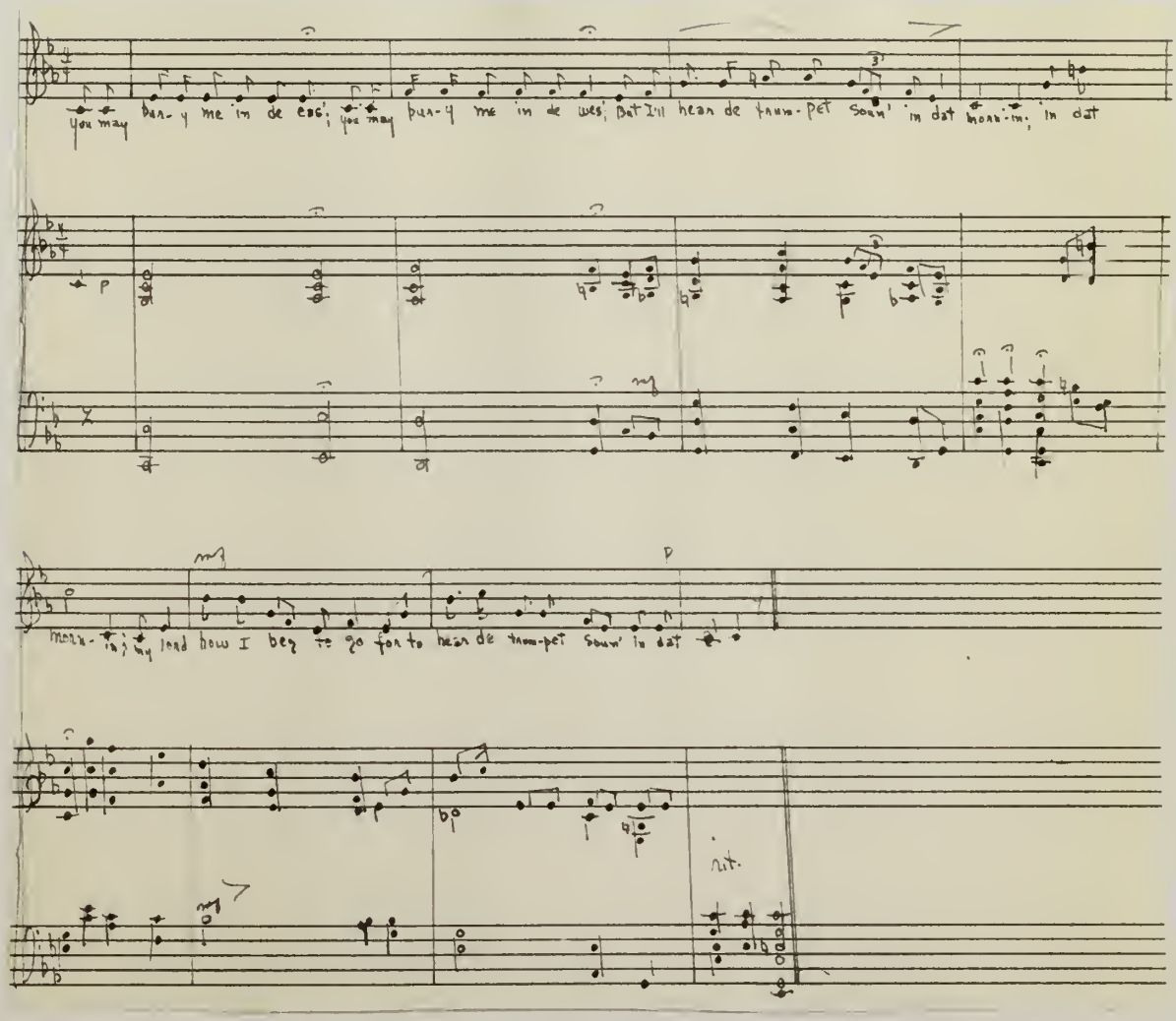
The following are examples of the raised sixth in the minor mode:

-Come Trembling Down-



A spiritual from Boyle County, Kentucky, transcribed from the singing of a former slave for the author by Miss Mildred J. Hill, of Louisville. An example of the raised sixth in the minor mode arranged by Mr. Krehbiel.[1]

-You May Bury me In de Eas'-



Melody from "The Story of the Jubilee Singers"; arrangement for this work by H. T. Burleigh. Example of the

1. Krehbiel, H.E.--Afro-American Folksongs

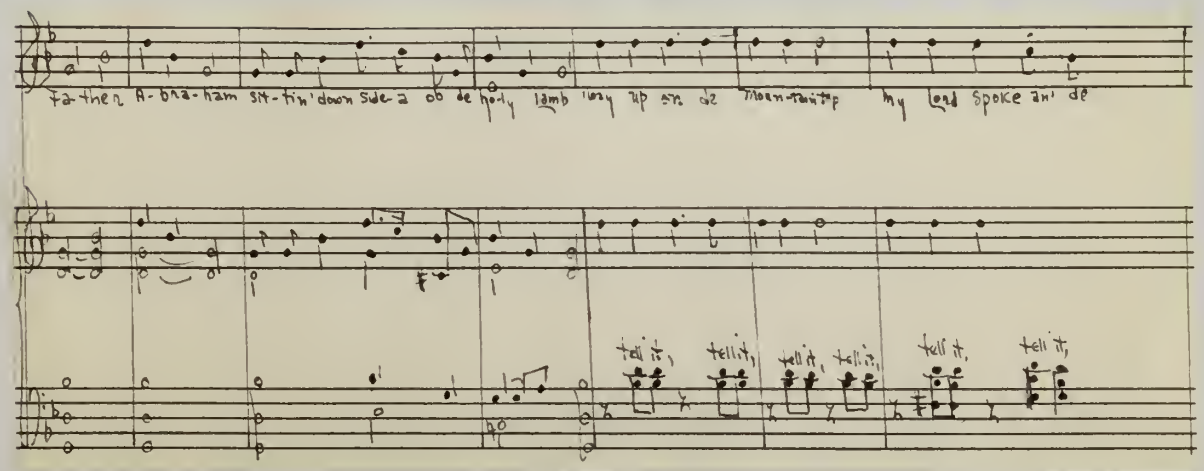
effect of the major sixth in minor mode.[1]

Another arbitrary alteration of the minor scale results from raising the fourth interval; others from raising the seventh. This is found true of modern Occidental harmony and is so marked an element in the music of South-eastern Europe and Western Asia that the scale on which much of this music is based is called the Oriental scale in many books. It is found in the Balkan peninsula of the Poles and Magyars. The ancient synagogal hymns of the Jews are full of it.

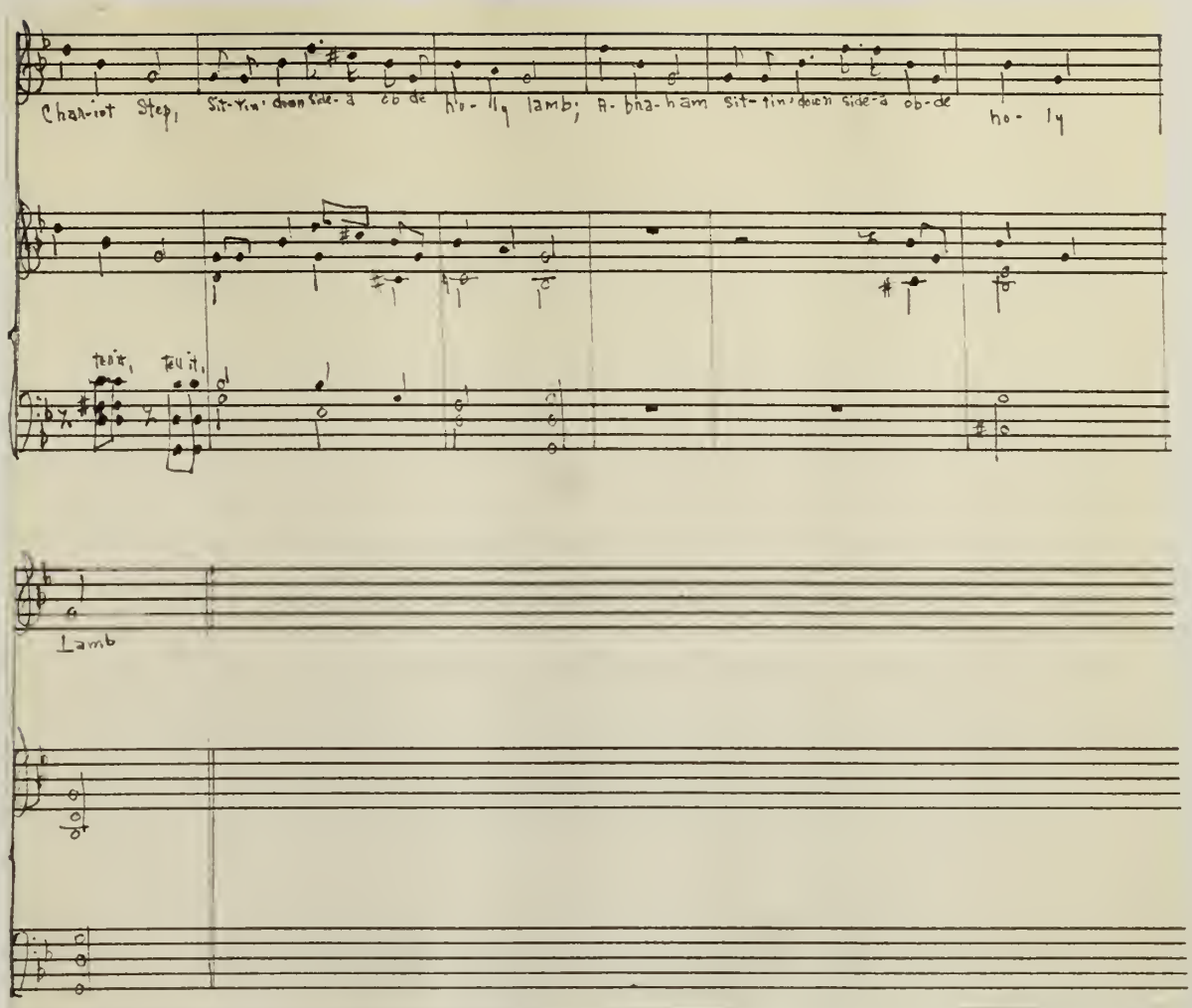
The following is an example of the augmented, or superfluous second as Engel calls it.[2] An instance of the creation of the interval by the raising of the fourth:

"Father Abraham"
Tell It"

Andante



1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs
2. Ibid



Words and melody from "Calhoun Plantation Songs". Collected and edited By Emily Hallowell; arranged by H. T. Burleigh. An example of the Oriental interval called the augmented second. ($C\sharp$-B^b)

These melodies which seem to be based on the Oriental scale prove the persistance in the Afro-American folksongs of an element, or idiom, retained from their original Eastern home or derived from intercourse between the ancestors of the black slaves and some of the peoples of western Asia to whom the scale is native".[1]

1. Krehbiel, H.E.--Afro-American Folksongs (p.91)

The Negro in his folksongs early exhibits an inherent sense of harmony. This instinct for natural polyphony can be accounted for whenthe music of the South African Black is studied. For a clearer understanding of Negro harmony, i.e., in its unadulterated stage, itself, against the many Europeanized forms, the music of the South African Black will be discusssed

3a. The African language is such that it immediately supposes a connection between speech and song. This has created an elementary sense of harmony.

In a paper read by Mr. Kirby[1] before the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in July, 1926, and published in Johannesburg in that year by that association, he attempted to show that the speech-tone of the Bantu had not only influenced his melodies, but had also directed the course of his polyphonic thought in a direction analogousto that taken by the polyphonic thought of the peoples of Europe during the early centuries of the Christian era. On examination of many African songs it was shown that: (a) Approximate scales of pentatonic nature formed the basis of most of the melodies, and that such polyphony as existed in purely vocal ensemble was a result of parallel singing within the limits of these pentatonic scales, or scales derived from them; the interval of parallelism being usually the fourth or the fifth; this parallel singing, analogous to the organum of medieval Europe due to the influence of speech-tone, which is so important to

1. Kirby, Percival R.--Study of Negro Harmony
(Mus. Quarterly 16:404-14: 1930)

the Bantu languages that alteration of the tones of the various syllables of a word would frequently alter its meaning, even though it was correctly pronounced. Thus the presence of such definite speech tone in the Bantu languages must necessarily result in parallel singing whenever a number of singers attempt to intone a common sentiment. This would actually cause the lower sounds of the "harmonic series" to be felt, these being the sounds that are most readily cited from primitive wind and string instruments, such as are those still made by African musicians; and these sounds would tend little by little to create a rudimentary harmonic sense, by bringing about a gradual stabilization of note-centres which through diversity of language would vary from race to race; and by implanting in the mind of the black a feeling and desire for the simultaneous sounding of notes of different pitches. This parallel singing at the interval of a fifth or fourth within the limits of a pentatonic scale would force the singer to take cognizance of new intervals, the sixth and the third as will be seen in the following example:

This distinguishes the organum of the African from that of medieval Europe, in which the original interval of a fourth or fifth was maintained throughout, owing to its being based on heptonic scales; European polyphonists deliberately altering the one imperfect fifth which their system involved, in order to maintain perfect parallelism. Thus parallelism within the limits of a pentatonic scale would tend to lead naturally to a harmonic knowledge of intervals other than the

simplest ones. But independent polyphonic movement of parts would not occur systematically until tone ceased to be the predominant factor in language and stress took its place.

The South African black, accordingly, was in a position to assimilate readily the European harmonic system in its simpler aspects; and with the advent of the white man, and particularly of the white missionary, he did so with avidity. As a result, it is found in South African native music in all stages of development from the unadulterated type found in the krools to the European variety, but which, according to Mr. Kirby, does not display anything like the degree of development which has been achieved in the best work of black musicians of the United States who have been trained on European lines.

The results of the examination of organized vocal music of the raw South African native have revealed certain general characteristics:

(1) Antiphonal singing, where the soloist is answered by a chorus; so frequently met with that it is considered basic.

(2) Polyphonic parallelism, the intervals usually present being the unison, the fifth or fourth, and the sixth or third, together with octave reduplication when men and women sing together; absence of musical notation leading to great variation in detail within the limits of a definite general style of performance.

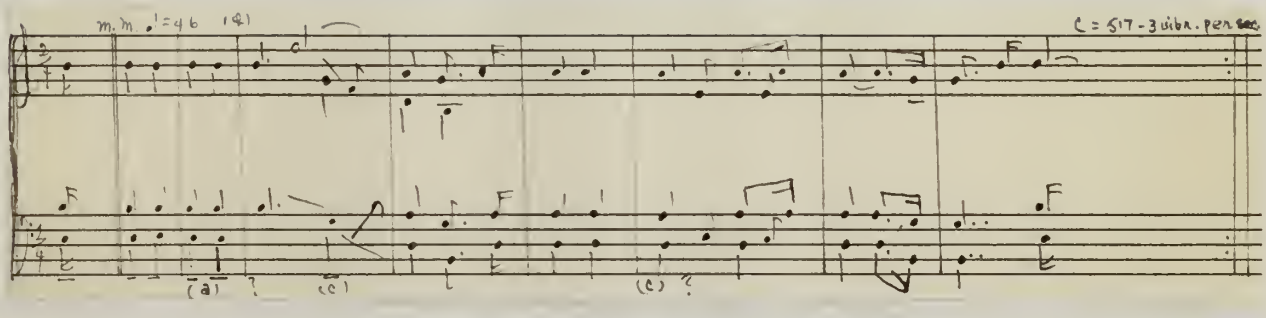
(3) There is a tendency for melodies to proceed in a

downward direction, this being the normal tendency of melody in its primitive state.

(4) The music forms employed are simple, as a general rule, rarely exceeding a musical sentence.

(5) As the words and the melodies qualify each other, their formal structures are similar.

The following example illustrates many of these features. It is an old chant of the Mpumuza Chiefs of Natal which was transcribed by Mr. Kirby in South Africa. As it was quite impossible to represent accurately the true pitch of the sounds sung, the system utilized was the common one giving the nearest sound in ordinary musical notation, and indicating by a plus or minus whether the sound is slightly above or slightly below the note written.



The following are the characteristics of the song as given by Mr. Kirby:

(1) The Melody, is carried by the upper male voice duplicated in the octave above by some of the women's voices.

(2) The lower male voices sing in parallel at the interval of a fifth below the melody. At times some of the women duplicate this part in the upper octave.

(3) The presence of the interval of a sixth is seen in the fourth and seventh bars; due to parallelism within the limits of the pentatonic scale.

(4) At (a) the male voice disappeared. At (b) the upper D was distinctly heard, the suggestion of a triad being very significant; the G. also, being unmistakably present. The slanting lines at (c) indicate portamento, or gliding from note to note.

(5) The Chant was started by a woman or alternately by a man and woman in octaves, who intoned a portion of a second phrase; a man joined in, and then all the singers began the first phrase quite decisively, the men singing in two parts, and the women an octave above the higher male voice part, except during bars three and four.

(6) The tune is of definite though elementary structure. It consists of two equal phrases in double time, each containing four strong and four weak accents, and commencing with an anacrusis. The two phrases balance perfectly, the whole forming a complete musical sentence.

(7) It is also noted that not only the melody notes, but also the notes used in "harmonizing" that melody belong to the particular pentatonic scale employed, save that the gliding referred to above implies a certain flexibility of treatment at times. The upper male voice is made to sound more prominent at times.

3b. In accordance with the above discussion the following spirituals have been analyzed, the recordings of Mrs. Burlin[1] considered as being accurate. (1) "O Ride on Jesus", (2)"Go Down Moses," (3)"Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" (4)"Good News Chariots Comin'", (5)"'Tis Me, O Lord", (6) "Listen to De Lambs", (7)"O Every Time I feel De Spirit", (8) "God's A-Gwine Ter Move all De Troubles Away".

A. General Charateristics

(1) They were sung by groups of four singers, tenor, "lead", baritone and bass. The lead maintains the melody throughout and acts as soloist during the antiphony which is chracteristic of the songs, strongly suggesting African influence.

(2) The melodies are all definitely pentatonic.

(3) The only case where a note foreign to these scales is introduced into the melody is in a variant of No. 1 where the fourth of the scale occurs as a "passing" note suggestive of the "glide" in the African pentatonic songs.

B. Harmonic Characteristics

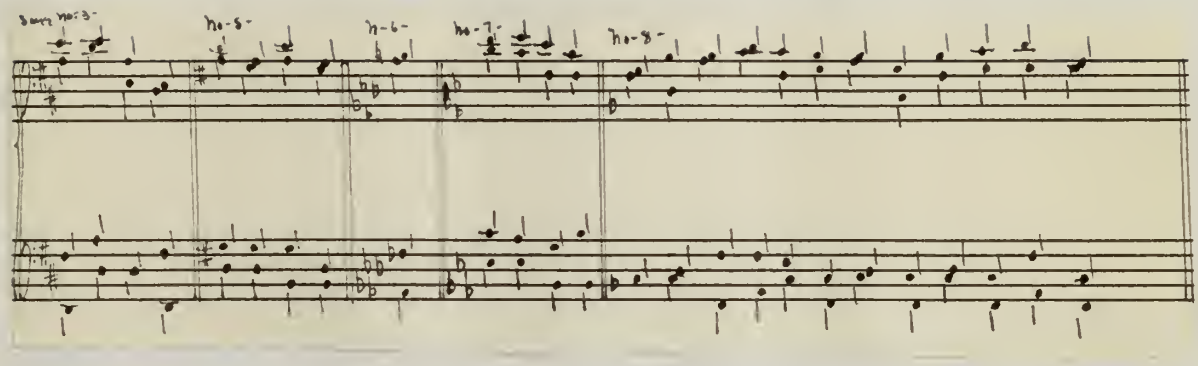
(1) The notes used in the harmonizations are with rare exceptions diatonic, and the bulk of them constituent notes of the pentatonic scale being used. When the fourth and seventh appear they have been introduced for harmonic reasons, or are "passing" notes. The infrequent use of seventh chords indicates the elementary nature of the harmony.

(2) The general spacings of these chords used in

1. Burlin, N.C. --Negro Folksongs (Hampton Series)

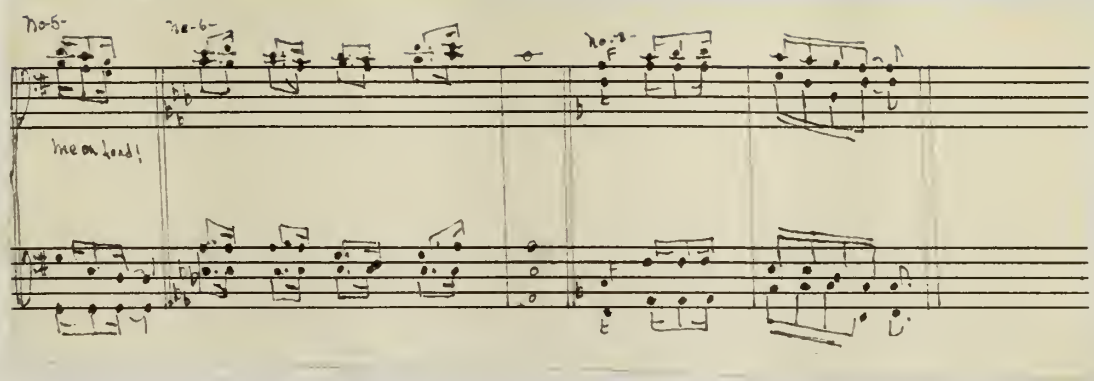
the harmonies show that there has been a general tendency to utilize principal chords I, IV, and V, and their inversions, with the occasional use of the triads of the remaining notes of the diatonic scale, except the seventh note.

(3) Throughout the songs a number of combinations of notes of a much less simple nature, contrasting violently with the simplicity of the bulk of the harmony, relieve it of its monotony. The following are examples:

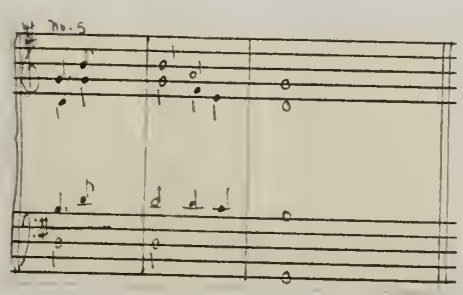


(4) All these combinations are the result of passing or auxiliary notes in the part singing. The combination is definitely European and undoubtedly of recent introduction into the harmonic system of the Negro. But whereas in European polyphony the various parts are related closely to each other as well as to the basic part, in these Negro songs the singers seem to be content if the different harmony parts are in agreement with each other. Thus chordal combinations have arisen which are not usually found in simple European harmony, and the result sounds to the ear more advanced than it is. Or, in other words, the Negro has arrived at a number of unusual and fresh sounding progressions by a species of "short-circuiting" which is of great

interest.[1] The following examples show the process:

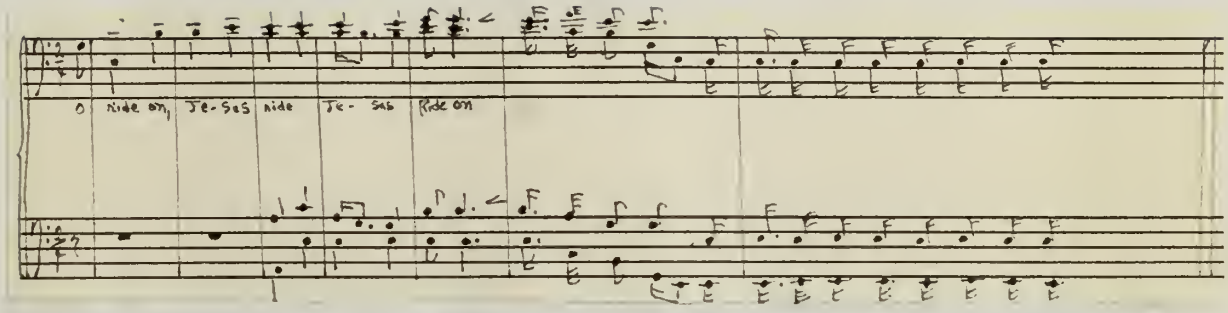


(5) Another feature of the Negro harmony consists of a tendency to cause the leading note to fall in the penultimate chord, when such a chord is a dominant or dominant seventh. This is due to a desire for complete cadential chords. All these characteristics are reported to be found in the music of the South African black where he had been in contact with the European and their music. In particular the desire for complete chords at the conclusion of a song, as a result of other findings, led the South African to the use, at times, of the following cadence, for which the "gliding" of the alto voices is no doubt responsible.



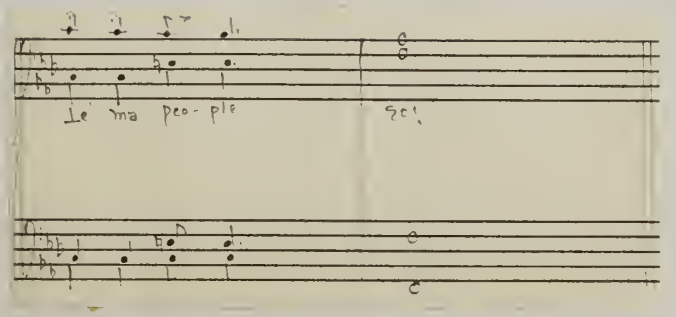
1. Kirby, Percival, R.--Study of Negro Harmony (Mus. Quarterly 16:404-14: 1930)

(6) Further, the spirituals show another important feature though the harmony generally bears signs of European influence; there are places where a reversion to primitive methods is clearly seen. The first tune "O Ride On, Jesus" affords an example:



The lead starts off unaccompanied with the powerful pentatonic melody. After two measures the remaining voices join in adding harmonies which are obviously of European descent; but at the verbal climax, which is also the climax of the tune, "Ride on, Conquering King", the bass actually reduplicating the melody of the "lead" in the lower octave in absolute defiance of European principles.

(7) The second tune "Go Down, Moses" also exhibits similar features in particular, the phenomena of parallelism is very pronounced, and this leads to unorthodox doubling of notes of the chord of the dominant seventh and to an abnormal resolution of it.



The work and play songs in Books 3 and 4 of the Hampton series,

"Negro Spirituals", by N. C. Burlin likewise exhibit the same features as the spirituals, some of them, however, consist of simple melodies with antiphonal answering in only one part, and are completely African in nature.

The results of the inquiry are:

(1) The melodies are clearly pentatonic throughout, or, if other notes have been added, these are rarely used, and they occur principally as passing notes, which may be explained by the "gliding" so characteristic of African peoples, although they may have become stabilized by harmonic influences.

(2) The accompanying parts are in the main, pentatonic. With few exceptions, additional notes are due to harmonic influences. When these notes are the fourth or seventh of the scale, they are almost invariably introduced for harmonic purposes.

(3) The chords used are relatively few in number and as a rule are closely connected. Modulation is practically non-existent. That which at first sight appears to be unusual chords is due to the fact that conflicting polyphonic lines, each simply related to the main melody, clash, and unusual endings will frequently be found to be due to a conflict between a European "authentic" cadence, and an African "plagal" melody.

(4) The general style of the harmonizations would appear to be of relative recent origin.[1]

1. Kirby, P. R.--Study of Negro Harmony

The fact that the melodies are consistently pentatonic, while the harmonies show European influences would indicate that the melodies, together with their words, are of earlier date than their harmonies. It is therefore probable that the melodies represent African practice governed to some extent by European formal structure, due to direct or subconscious borrowing of fragments of European hymnology and the like, which in course of time have been modified by the black, whose elementary sense of form is reflected in the tunes and in the words, while the harmonies represent a definite attempt on the part of the black man to emulate the white man's harmonic methods, and to secure his results. In so doing, the black man, by limiting hi self in his choice of chords and by dispensing with notation, has acquired a flair for the practically extemporaneous harmonization of the simple pentatonic melodies that are characteristic of his people, which is not normally found among whites.

4. The early conception of the spirituals was that they were a symbol of suffering, thereby inferring the minor mode.[1] The following are statements representing the generally accepted opinion: Col. Higginson wrote in the "Atlantic Monthly", "They that walked in darkness sang songs in olden days--sorrow songs--for they were weary at heart---".[2] "The songs are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; and tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways."[3] "A tinge of sadness pervades all the melodies which bear as little resemblance to the popular Ethiopian melodies as twilight to noonday."[4]

Physiologically and psychologically the life of the Negro slaves, was, on the whole, so weighted with physical and spiritual suffering as necessarily to make its musical expression one of hopeless grief. But for many reasons, the songs are not so poignant an expression of the life of the black as has been so widely assumed. Therefore the state of "minor-keyed pathos", believed common to the songs, is questionable. As a matter of fact the major and minor modes are not unqualified expressions of pleasure and pain, gaiety and gravity, happiness and sorrow. Funeral marches are never expressions of joy, yet Handel's "Dead March in Saul" is in the major mode, for instance, and some of the modern scherzos are in minor.

1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro American Folksongs
2. Higginson--Negro Spirituals (Atlantic Monthly, June, 1867)
3. Dubois--Souls of Black-Folk
4. Spaulding--Continental Monthly

Of the Negro songs analyzed by Mr. Krehbiel, 331 are major and only 62 are minor. They express hopefulness and cheerful endurance of present pain in contemplation of the rewards of rest and happiness hereafter; the two emotional poles in question being illustrated in the settings of the song "Nobody Knows". Col. Higginson seemsto have sounded the keynote of the emotional stimulus of the songs when he spoke of their infinite pathos as a commentary on the lives of the creators: "Nothing but patience for this life-nothing but triumph in the next." Further, the Negroes could not sing of the New Jerusalem, toward which they were journeying, in tones of grief. The Biblical tales and imagery also called for celebration in jubilant rather lugubrious accents. The rolling of Jordan's waters, the sound of the last trump, the overwhelming of Pharaoh's hosts, the vision of Jacob's ladder, the building of the Ark, Daniel in the den of lions, Ezekiel's "wheel in the middle of a wheel", Elijah's chariot of fire, the breaking up of the universe; all these things and lurid pictures of the Apocalypse, whether hymns with allegorical intent or as literal conceptions, demanded swelling proclamation. And all received it.

This feeling was encouraged by the attitude, legal and personal, of the slave owners. It is even likely that restrictions were placed upon the slaves, in which an explanation may be found for the general tone of cheer, not unmixed with pathos, which characterizes the music.[1] There is a hint of this in a remark recorded by Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble in her "Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation", thus: "I have heard these

1. Krebiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs

plantations prohibit melancholy tunes or words and encourage nothing but cheerful music and senseless words, deprecating the effect of sadder strains upon the slaves, whose peculiar musical sensibility might be expected to make them especially excitable by any songs of a plaintive character and having reference to their particular hardships."[1]

Cheerful music to lighten and quicken work and increase its efficiency was also peculiar to the slave life of America; possibly the survival of a custom of the Negroes in their aboriginal home. James Augustus Grant, in his book "A Walk Across Africa", reports that his people when cleaning rice were always supported by singers, who accompanied the workers with clapping of hands and stamping of feet. Geo. Francis Lyon in his "Narrative of Travels in Northern Africa", writes that at one place he heard the Negro women singing a national song in chorus while pounding wheat always in time with the music. Mr. Reade observed in "The African Sketch Book", that his people always began to sing when he compelled them to overcome their natural laziness and to continue rowing.

Whether the use of song, as a stimulant to work was brought from Africa or was acquired in America; the significant fact is that wherever Negro slavery existed on this continent there it was found. In his book "Two Years in the French West Indies" Lafcadio Hearn writes: "Formerly the work of cane-cutting resembled the march of an army; first advanced the cutlassers in line, naked to the waist; next the amareuses, the women, who tied and carried the cane; and behind these, those who

1. Kemble--Journal of a Resident on a Georgian Plantation In 1838--39: p.150--160; 277--79

carried the Ka, the drum, with a paid crieur or crieuse, to lead the song, and lastly the black commandeur, for general."[1]

Booker T. Washington, reports that wherever companies of Negroes were working together, in the cotton fields and tobacco factories, on the levees in the United States, this spirited music was present. And thus speaks the writer of the article entitled "American Music" in "The American History and Encyclopaedia of Music", published by Irving Squire: "Work on the plantations was often done to the accompaniment of songs, whose rhythmic swing acted as an incentive to steadier and better labor; especially was this true with the mowers at harvest." Charles Peabody tells of a leader in a band of slaves who was besought by his companions not to sing a certain song because it "made them work too hard".[2]

Thus it is seen that had the folksongs of the American Negro been conceived in sorrow and born in heaviness of heart by a people walking in darkness, they could not have been used indiscriminately, as they were, for such factors as spiritual comfort and physical stimulation.

1. Krehbiel, H. E.--Afro-American Folksongs
2. Ibid

5. The most obvious point of demarcation between Negro music and European music is found in rhythm. The simpler rhythms natural to the white man (referring to folk-music, the peoples' song, not of the elaborate creations of trained musicians) are usually even and symetrical. Throughout Western Europe and in English and Latin countries, the accents fall as a rule on the regular beats of the spoken tongue and on the regular beat of the music. The opposite is the case in Negro songs; here the rhythms are uneven, jagged, and at first hearing, eccentric, for the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what is called syncopation of a very intricate and highly developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation can be explained by the way in which the natural rhythms of the English language are distorted to fit the rhythm of Negro music: where the white man would sing, "Go down, Moses," the Negro chants, "Go down Moses", while a phrase like "See my Mother", becomes in the mouth of the colored singer, "See my Mother". The identical accents are found in even the wordless vowel refrains of native African songs.[1]

The syncopation referred to is known as the "snap". It is so powerful an impulse, indeed, that it broke down the barriers interposed by the new language which they were compelled to adopt in their new home. For the sake of the 'snap' the creators of the folksongs of the American Negroes did not hesitate to distort the metrical structure of their lines. In

1. Burlin, N.C.-- Negro Folksongs, Book II

scores upon scores of instances trochees like "Moses", "Satan", "mother", "brother", "sister", etc. became iambs while dactyles became amphibrachys, like "nobody knows". Of the 527 songs examined by Mr. Krehbiel, 315 contain the rhythmic snap; which is, "as entitled to be called African as Scottish".

Another noticeable feature of the songs, says Theodore F. Seward in his preface to the Fisk Jubilee collection "is the rare occurence of triple time, or three part measure, among them. The reason for this is doubtless to be found in the beating of the foot and swaying of the body, which are such frequent accompaniments of the singing. These motions are in even measure and in perfect time; so it will be found that however broken and seemingly irregular the movement of the music it is always capable of the most exact measurement."[1]

Regarding this Mr. Krehbiel says, "The regular swaying of the body might be described as an effect rather than as a cause of the uneven movement of the music. It is undoubtedly an inherited predilection, an inherited relic, an idiom that had taken so powerful a hold on them they carried it over into their new environment. It could be a survival of a primitive march-rhythm which, in the nature of the case, lies at the bottom of the first communal movements of primitive peoples; uneven measure is more naturally associated with a revolving movement. The "shout" of the slaves was a march, circular only because that is the only kind of march which will not carry the dancers away from the gathering place."[2]

1. Krehbiel, H.E.--Afro-American Folksongs
2. Ibid

The innate rhythmical capacity of the African slaves finds it expression in the American songs in the skill with which the Negroes constrain their poetry to accept the music. Mr. Allen writes in his preface to the "Slave Songs": "The Negroes keep exquisite time in singing, and do not suffer themselves to be daunted by any obstacles in the words. The most obstinate Scripture phrases or snatches from hymns they will force to do duty with any tune they please, and will dash heriocally through a trochaic tune at the head of a column of iambs with wonderful skill". [1]

"Rhythmically the Negro folk-song has far more variety of accent than the European; it captivates the ear and the imagination with its exciting vitality and with its sense of alertness and movement. The black man has by nature a highly organized rhythmic sense. A totally uneducated Negro, dancing or playing the bones is often a consummate artist in rhythm, performing with utter abandon and yet with flawless accuracy. My African informant, Kambo Dimango, thought nothing of singing one rhythm, beating another with his hands and dancing a third and all at once, reports Mrs. Burlin." [2]

1. Allen, Garrison--Slave Songs of the United States
2. Burlin, Negro-Folksongs, Bk. II

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS

The two divisions of the Negro folksongs will be discussed in this chapter--the religious and secular--together with the poetry found in both. Though originating in the sameway, and termed under the same general heading, "spirituals", they are distinctly different when the nature of their subject-matter is considered.

1a. "The religious development of the Negro in the New World in its beginnings was an outgrowth based upon the experiences of the natives in Africa".[1] "A knowledge of certain features most distinctive of the African religion can not fail therefore to deepen our understanding of the life of the Negro in America and particularly that life out of which his music came. For without his religious susceptibilities, the ascendancy of Christianity over him would have been problematic, and without his contact with the Christian faith, there would have been no spirituals."[2]

The Africans in religion are far from thinking in common. Religion is manifested in various ways, and the religious practices appear diversified, but the ensemble of these beliefs and relations of different religious elements among them remains essentially the same.

As among the other peoples foreign creeds have made inroads. And contact with Judaism is evident. The so-called African animism and Judaism had much in common. Their ideas of creation and the dualism of good and evil are about the same.

1. Woodson, --"African Background Outlined"
2. Laubenstein, Paul F.--Race Values in Afro-American Music

Conspicuous in the African doctrine appears the belief in one unique God, who created everything which exists, but who after finishing this task ceased to concern himself with human affairs. He is an inaccessible God without image of him left in the minds of the natives; with a name, however, which is not confused with that of supernatural forces. They ascribe to him no character or fixed attribute. They say nothing about his sojourn or his occupations. Everything about him seems extremely vague. They admit the existence of the creator but they do not concern themselves about Him since he does not concern himself about them. What man needed to do, as the African understood it, was to appease the spirits of the million of things organic and inorganic in which the spirit of this divinity is manifested.[1]

The African Negroes believe that every "animated being" incloses within itself, in addition to its body, two immaterial principles. "One a sort of breath or vital fluid without an individuality or personality of its own, and which animates the material part and communicates life and movement to it. It is eternal in the sense that it is anterior to the body that it animates for the time being and will survive it to go and animate another, and so on until the end of time. Like matter it is infinitely divisible and can dissociate itself into various elements each of which suffices alone or combined with another element coming from elsewhere, to animate a given body. When a man dies, it is that the "vital breath" has abandoned its carnal envelope in order immediately to create a new life either in a human or animal foetus

1. Woodson--African Background Outlined

in gestation or in a germinating plant. This is a sort of fluid, without personality, without intelligence or will, that may be compared to an electric current, but only in the etymological sense of the word (spiritus 'breath').[1]

The second principle is very different: born with the body which harbors it, at the same time, it constitutes the veritable personality of the being to whom it communicates its thought, its will, and the force to act. But movement cannot be accomplished if it is not ordered by the "vital breath". If it happens that one day the control of the vital breath escapes from the spirit or the second principle, and that, as a consequence, this breath leaves its envelope and death follows, it is because another spirit which is stronger has neutralized the first: that is why all death is attributed by the Negroes not to material causes, which for them are only secondary and immediate causes, but to the psychic influence of an evil-minded spirit, the only real and first cause of death.

After the disease of a being, only his spirit lives, and it lives such as it was during the lifetime of this being with the same personality, the same character, the same affectations and the same hatreds. Only it no longer has the 'vital breath' to command nor the carnal envelope limiting its fancy; and so it becomes even more powerful, being no longer hampered in its action by the necessity for directing the life of the body and for guiding itself, in a way, by the vital breath. Also it is then deified; and it is here that we must find the

1. Woodson--African Background Outlined

origin of the cult of the dead, or of the manes of the ancestors.

This spirit is a principle that is invisible but which sees everything, which takes account of all, is sensitive, can be offended unintentionally, is equally irascible and capable of causing hard expiation for even voluntary offenses that have been done to it, but feeble and vain as man who created it in his own image, letting itself be moved and cajoled by prayers and offerings or influenced by propitiatory sacrifices. However, the spirits of the dead are not divinities, they are emanations from a superior divinity. These spirits have no connection with that which they animate. They pass from one body to the other, and it is in this sense that the body is eternal. It is of interest, then only in proportion as it assures the duration of the individual life.

Notable is the absence of any idea of reward or punishment beyond this life, the spirits in which they manifest themselves being good or evil according to the attitude of man toward these spirits. The practices of which these spirits are the object may be reduced to a small number: the worship of ancestors, the belief in "genies" interpretations of their will and the like. They involve a series of long and complicated operations necessitating a special initiation. This is the role of the special class of individuals, clergy, magicians, sorcerers, "feticheurs", constituting frequent religious associations, secret societies, performing ceremonies according to rigorously defined rules.

Such dim reminiscenes as these lingered in the mind of the Negro in America. It was a superior religion which must be held for the great change; here was a race with a religious susceptibility upon which to build.

With the obliteration of tribal distinctions and organizations the differentiating group notions and practices tend to disappear and particularly those practices and institutions which the planter took pains to eradicate, such as the native priesthood, the licentious orgies and dances at their festivals, witchcraft executions, human sacrifices, and repulsive burial customs. Yet some of the age-old, deep-seated racial ideas lingered on in the subconscious memory, ready to be caught up and given a new developement in the new religion.

On the other hand the African could scarcely fail to be impressed by his master's religion which made him superior to diabolical agencies, to incidents, disease, weather and the like. Gradually by the unconscious, silent influence of example and suggestion working upon his keen religious susceptibilities--perhaps more by this than by anything else and by the deliberate but somewhat desultory efforts of owner and missionary, the great change in his own Christianity was wrought.

The spirits as representation of deity made easy within Christianity the transition to the belief in angels and in the localization of evil in one spirit, Satan. If the perfectly good spirit of God has an abode of perfect bliss, namely heaven, its dualistic counterpart for Satan, Sheol, was not difficult

to conceive. As there were good and evil spirits, so there were God's men and God's enemies among human beings.

But individualist as always, the Negro insisted upon making a choice. That choice was determined by the demands of his perpetual consciousness for the exercise of which he found plenty of room in current Methodist and Baptist beliefs and practices. And he chose the particular types of Christianity best suited to his needs, so he proceeded to choose the elements which were to make up for him his particular type of Methodist and Baptist religion. What this choice involved is reflected in the spirituals in which it is so largely embodied.[1]

1a (1) When taken stanza by stanza, in comparing the songs with the hymns, and not as a whole, racial modifications are considerable. The Negro regards the joyousness of living more than the white religious enthusiast; but he has adopted the great idea underlying many of the old hymns that this life is only a pilgrimage to eternity.

The journey begins with the desire to be saved. "I wa-ant to go up dere", sing the elect and the "mo'hner" with a yearning emphasis on the "want". "I want to go to heab'n and I want to go right". I have a mother, sister, brother, or deacon in the promised land or "way in de glory", whom I want to take by the hand. "If you get there before I do, tell all my folks I'm a-comin' too". The back-slider and the sinner are asked, "Don't you want to go to heaben?" and are urged to "come on", and "join in this band". In order to go, you must "lay down dis world" and "shoulder up" your cross;

1. Laubenstein--Race Value in Afro-American Music

you must keep yo' hand on de gospel plow". More specifically, you must "get all yo' business right", "get religion", "stop your tongue from telling lies", and "hold your light". You must know the way--"Show me the way, oh, show me the way".

Once "my feet been taken out of de miry clay" (here the first personal pronoun takes a significant precedence over the second) "I'm on mah journey now". There is still "one wide river to cross", and old Satan who is a"snake in the grass", " a liar and conjuror too", besets the path , as he did that of "John de Bunyun". I may climb Jacob's ladder or travel over a "rough rocky road" as a pedestrian; "a sweet chariot swings low to carry me home", or I take passage on the "old Ship of Zion;" but if I go with the majority I go on the "gospel train". There is even a "little black train", not a Jim Crow train, but "death's black train". When I enter heaven I am to be "all dressed in white".

"When I get dere", I know quite definitely what I am going to do. I am going to ride on "two white horses" or in"a golden chariot". I am going to "wear that starry crown", "walk and talk with Jesus", "set down 'side de Lamb an' Father Abraham", "eat at de welcome table", "jine de happy angel band", "set in de Kingdom and hear sweet Jordan roll". Fully accoutred with shoes, robe, derby crown, and harp, I'm "gonna walk all over 'God's heab'n". Realizing an earthly aspiration to be a coachman and race rider, I shall "whip them golden horses". It is a heaven worth having. "Everybody talk

about heab'n ain't going dere," but I have no doubt as to myself. Hell is another matter. It is "dark and dismus", but it is mainly a lurid warning to the sinner man who is sitting on its gate. The mourner is invited to "rise and tell" "how be" it. The elect, climbing Zion's hill, "mos done sufferin'", and with "good news" ringing in his ears, isn't seriously worried by its threat, for he knows he has "come through", and that the "Lord's gonna meet you on half-way ground". But hell is far from being something simply of the mind itself. It is approached by a road "fair and wide", a road kept fairly warm with people who "walk on the cross", liars, crap-shooters, drunkards, back-biters, and schemers. You can't scheme into heaven, you can't "shoot 'er into heaven"; "God'll ketch you with no excuse".

As for the sinner, he had better row his boat one side. "Death comes slippin' in the house at night; let him take warning. "Yo' house on fire" (here the pronoun changes back to the second person); "I'm goin' to leave you behind". In the last Judgment, "When the first trumpet sound" and "when the rocks and mountains shall all melt away", the elect will find a new hidin' place but the sinner is asked, "What you goin' to do when the world's on fire?"

God is a much more definite figure than Satan; Jesus ("Marse Jesus") is a baby chile, a companion, and a familiar friend, the driver of the heavenly chariot, the captain of the gospel ship, and the conductor of the gospel train.

The number of Biblical characters mentioned is more astonishing even than their actions. In the present collection are found Jacob, Moses, Noah, Jonah, David, the two Marys, Martha, Luke, John, Ananias and Sapphira, Cain, Abel, Daniel Nicodemus, Paul, Silas, the Hebrew children, John, Jesus, Joseph, Josiah, Ezekiel, and Pharaoah's daughter. Some are merely mentioned in passing or as witnesses "to my Lawd". Others are dealt with very erratically by the Negro memory and imagination. Mary's three links of chain are curiously unscriptural.

It isn't only in the Biblical incidents and characteristics of the spirituals that the Negro displays his fondness for reading and explaining the Bible. Many spiritual stanzas are based upon favorite texts--a few are given thus:

Biblical Passages	Spiritual Passages
Ezekiel, xxxvii, I-II, Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I shall cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live	Dry bones gwint to rise again, Dese bones gwine rise again.
Ezekiel, i & X.	Zika made a wheel.
Daniel, ii, 34. Thou sawest that a stone was cut off without hands.	Daniel saw the stone.
2 Kings, ii, I-II. Elijah's translation.	Swing low, sweet chariot comin' for to carry me home.
Jeremiah, viii, 22. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?	There is balm in Gilead.
Isaiah, xiii, 10. And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.	And the moon refuse to shine.
Isaiah, xlii, 10. We will sing unto him a new song. (Cf. Psalm xl, 3, Rev. V.,9 and xIv, 3)	We will sing a new song.

Bibilical Passages	Spiritual Passages
Isaiah, ii, 10. Enter into the rock and hide thee in the dust. (cf. Isaiah ii, 20, 21.)	Hide me over in the Rock of Ages. Went down to the rock to hide my face.
Isaiah, vi, ii. Then said I, Lord, how long; xxvii, 13. And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown. (Cf. also the seven successive trumpet blasts of destruction in Rev. vii & lx.	Lord, how long shall I blow? What shall I do when the first trumpet sounds?
Isaiah, x, 6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation.	Hypocrite, hypocrite, de Lawd despise.
Isaiah, IX, I. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.	Rise, shine and shout your jubilee, Den my little soul gwine to shine, shine.
Isaiah, ad. lib. Many verses beginning "In that day".	In that day.
Corinthians, v, I. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle, were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands.	Not made with hands, I know I have another building.
Peter, iii, 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.	When de star from de elements is fallin'.
Revelation vi 12, 13, And the sun became black as a sack cloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth.	An' de sun an' de moon dip in blood. What you gwine do when de world on fire?
Rev., vii, 13. What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?	Who's that comin' all dressed in white? Must be the children of the Israelite.
Rev. xix, ii, And I saw heaven open and behold a white horse and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. Also xxix, 14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses.	Two white horses side by side. Thems the horses I'm a-gwine to ride.

Biblical Passages	Spiritual Passages
Rev. xx, 12. And another book was opened which was the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.	My name's been written in de book of life.
Rev. xxii, 2. In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there the tree of life.	Over all trees in Paradise. The Christians call it the tree of life. 1

The spiritual "Jacob's Ladder" has its background in the Genesis story of the dream of Jacob. Jacob has cheated his brother of his father's blessing and has swindled him out of his birthright. As revenge, Esau is seeking his life. The harvest time for Jacob has come. In order that he may be saved from his brothers' wrath, Jacob's mother spirits him away and gives a serious reason for her son's disappearance.

After traveling a day's journey, Jacob lies down to sleep, using a stone as a pillow. As he sleeps he dreams. In his dream he sees a ladder stretching from "earth to heaven" and on this ladder angels are descending and ascending. When he awakes he is convinced that, despite his sin and his own straightened circumstances, God is there and he cares.

There are three things about this experience of Jacob's which would make a tremendous appeal to the slaves and which would bring to them strength and assurance.

First: Jacob's future was most uncertain; he was going to a strange land, a land crowded with many experiences, new and hazardous. The future of the slaves was equally uncertain and hazardous. Tomorrow was too fearful to contemplate. Yes, the future for them was perilous and uncertain.

1. White, N.I.--American Negro Folksongs

Second: Jacob could not turn back. Because of dishonorable deeds, the bridges behind him were burned. Future uncertain, past impossible! The singers of this song could not turn back, altho' for an entirely different set of reasons. An immediate past crowded with tragedy; the thought of which would fill the soul with horror. Yes, the past for them was impossible.

Thus in America the Negroes' songs do show reflections of their lives with the white man and his contact with Christianity, the two greatest factors in the new modus vivendi. The Christian gospel appealed to the slave. While humble and personal the songs might be, the new frame of reference in which his spiritual life is now set lifts them out of the common-place--a proceeding not untypical of the best Christianity--and gives them a new dignity. The majority of the songs created have this religious frame of reference. These are the ones which fitted them to survive.[1]

From the religious and musical point of view one may be thankful that the choices are such as they were and that the emotional Methodists and Baptists were ready at hand to satisfy the cravings of the Negro temperament. There would have been a different tale to tell, as regards his sacred folk-songs, had the Negro's religious environment been solely a formal Anglicanism or a set, ritualistic Romanism both aristocratic in spirit and procedure. In the Roman Catholic environment like that of New Orleans the Creole slave had indeed his 'Place Congo' to which he could resort on Sunday. Here he indulged in his primitive dances and thence he gave us some interesting dance tunes, satirical and love songs, but few, if any religious

1. Thurman, H.B.--The Message of the Spirituals

songs. Where the Negro adopted Romanism, his religion easily became an external veneer for his African culture and religious ideas. Where the Methodists and Baptists remained supreme, however, his sacred folk-songs make clear the extent to which his religion had penetrated his life, and at the same time they show that he had by no means left his perpetual consciousness behind him.

The Negro still felt the urge in his meditation to think aloud in song, to turn life itself into music, to sing his flowing consciousness into expression, felt it natural that singing should be a kind of melodious musing aloud.

These elements were chosen by the Negro from a Christianity that was presented to him, to make up the type of religion most satisfactory to him; elements appealing to him from the point of view of his situation at the time and from that of his African heritage.

The spirituals prove that the Negro's impressionability, in the face of as much of the white man's culture as that to which he was exposed, did not allow him merely to imitate the latter's religious songs. His strong individualism caused him to surpass all religion, poetry, language, and music, the result being a product bearing the unmistakable marks of the Negro genius in the way of form, rhythm, sound and imagery, fused together with Western melody, language and religious content.

The result of this contact of the African with a new religion and a new environment was to produce a new electicism characterized by its apocalyptic with its other worldly note,

by its individualism, its emotionalism, and its love of the concrete as over against abstract speculative tendencies, whereof the spirituals are witnesses.[1]

1. Laubenstein, P.F.--Race Values in Afro-American Music

lb. "The term secular was seldom applied to any of the songs by the Negro slave. All of them were called spirituals which doubtless shows that the term is a generic one."[1] Col. Higginson reports, "I heard but two songs among them to which they would not have given this generic name. One of these consisted of "Rain Fall and Wet Becky Martin", the other "Hangman Johnny" in endless repetition after the manner of college songs."[2] It was not until much later that the term secular was applied as referring to a distinct division of Negro song, the rhythmic characteristics of which are purported prevalent in all stages of American dance music.

This material, in nature secular, was produced by the slave just as were his religious songs, with the same modes and rhythms. They were primarily his 'work and labor songs' which were improvised or made up on the spot to fit the task. This impulse in the Negro to sing at work is inborn; it is a racial trait common to his African forbears. Compared to the available number of religious songs the secular songs are few.

One of the oldest worksongs is "Round de Corn Sally". This song in F minor noted in Slave Songs of the United States, 1867, comes from Virginia and pursues the African custom of bands of singers following the workers as they toiled in the fields, clapping their hands in rhythm to their song, thus through the sway of the tune, inciting the workers to greater labor. The gatherers of the corn swung their arms in rhythm to the song. The words of the song are obscure and their meaning has never been

1. Higginson--Negro Spirituals (Atlantic Monthly, June, 1867
2. Ibid

discovered. Two others are noted by Mrs. Burlin:

"Cott'n-Pickin' Song"

Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Gwine clean all ober dis farm.

One twenties of May mo'nin'
Under dat barnyard tree,
Dem Yankees read dem papers
An' sot dem darkies free.

Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Gwine clean all ober dis farm.

I's been workin' er contract
Eber since dat day,
An' fes' found out dis yur
Why hit didn't pay.

Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,

Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad,
Dis' Cott'n want a-pickin'
So bad.
Gwine clean all ober dis farm.

When Boss sol' dat Cott'n
I ask fo' mah half,
He tol' me I chopped out
Ma half wid de grass.
etc.

The primitive five-tone scale is clear throughout the song, even in all the many verses whose variants never venture far from the original simple outline. It seems to have sprung into life shortly after the Emancipation for it begins with no less an event than the reading of the proclamation of freedom to the slaves. Example two is the "Cott'n Dance Song"; the cotton picked, it was hauled to the scales and weighed. Then to celebrate the end of the labor, the Negroes broke into a jubilant dance, throwing themselves into the sport with the same exuberance and freshness as the tireless native runners and burden carriers of Africa. The cotton-pickers, amid shouts and laughter, formed a rough circle with the dancer in the middle. Then a dance-song rose from lusty throats while the encircling singers and onlookers beat a sharp rhythmic accompaniment by stamping their feet, clapping their hands and patting their knees. Anyone who wanted to dance leaped into the open space in the center of the circle; then when a dancer tired, he fell back and joined the rest; the equivalent in the religious

meetings, the shout.

"Cott'n Dance Song"

O Massa said from firs' to las'
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
Eighteen inches an' a half,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
Two stalks an' all de grass,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
So much a day--dat's yo' task,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
I t'ought I heard dat baby cry
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
Hit may be stung by a cott'n-fly,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
De hotter de sun de redder ma eye,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
I'll pick a hundred by an' by,
'Way down in de cott'n fiel
--etc.

This dance-song with its five-tone scale can easily be traced to the Dark Continent after the study of African folk-lore and music. For the dance, of which this song is the Europeanized melodic life, is plainly a transplanted and adopted version of the informal social dances of Savage Africa, with their rapid, intricate, pattering dance step and their rhythmic accompaniment in which the whole human body seems to take syncopated part.[1]

The words are spontaneous echoes of labor in the cottonfields. Other examples are: "Corn-Shuckin' Song", Hammerin' Song","Peanut

1. Burlin, N, C.--Negro Folksongs

Pickin' Song"etc., "Blow Boys, Blow", "Lullaby", "Liza Jane", "Chicka-Hanka". Other songs speak of the sea. There are rowing songs; in South Carolina where fine old lyrics were used interchangeably as chanteys sung on the old clipper ships that sailed to distant seas and steamboat songs sung in the Southwest. The latter songs were heard from the banks of the Ohio to the Rio Grande and are a part of chantey singing. There, too, are songs that treat of levee life in Cincinnati, songs of the roustabouts and the slave songs from Kentuckyand Virginia that were chanted on the river steamboats.

A popular old melody sung in the roustabouts haunts, ran,

"Molly was a good gal and a bad gal too,
O Molly, row gal.
I'll row,dis boat.and I'll row no more
Row, Molly gal.
Captain on the biler deck a'heavin' of the lead,
O Molly, row gal.
Calling to the pilot to give her 'turn ahead'
Row, Molly gal."

The construction of the chantey is akin to that of the "corn songs" of the Negroes, and the method of singing them practically the same as followed by the workers on land. The sailor songs were extemporized at sea by the chantey man who led the singing, and words and melody partake of the vernacular sea-faring man. (The name of chantey or shanty is said not to have been used before 1869, but the folk song of the sea was known before that date.[1]

A fine example of the type of religious hymn that was evolved into a labor song, is one found in Calhoun's Plantation

1. Hare, M.C.--Negro Musicians and their Music

Songs under the title "Hammering Judgment".

Don't you hear God talking, hammering, etc.
He's talking to Moses hammering, etc.
He's talking though thunder hammering, etc.
Hammering judgment hammering, etc.
Hammer keep a ringing hammering, etc.
God tol' Moses hammering, etc.
To tell ol' Pharaoh, hammering, etc.
To loose his people, hammering, etc.
An' would not loose dem, hammering, etc.

This body of song is scanty--the many work and social songs in use today being of recent origin and not a part of the true folk-material of the Negro.

1c. "In considering these poems, it should be remembered that part of their child-like and almost inarticulate quality is due not only to the child-like spirit of the race, but also to the fact that, to the deported African in this country, English was a foreign tongue only the rudiments of which (and these often distorted) were mastered by the unlettered slaves. Sometimes a sublime flash of imagery shines through a few poor words, crude and mishapen. Whereas in the songs of Africa, simple and child-like though many of them are, the idea suffers none of the lameness of expression that so often lends a note of unconscious and touching comedy to American Negro verse. Humor, the Negro has plenty--healthy and boisterous fun; but the humor of some of the texts is far from intentional. It is only owing to limited opportunity that so often the highest reaches of poetic imagination (common to the Negro, as to most simple people who live close to nature) had to be expressed in the very few every-day English words--and these in dialect--that formed the whole vocabulary of the slave-poet; this poverty gave birth to a unique poetic quality.[1]"

As Negro song-poems are usually conceived in the minds of their creators simultaneously with the music, the words bear the rhythmic values of the music phrases, giving us a characteristic Negro accent different from anything else in the English language. It may be scanned as sung. In Negro song it is the music which determines the rhythms of the phrase rather

1. Burlin--Negro Folksongs

than the words. Yet no two singers will sing the song alike so no two song-poets will stress the verse in exactly the same way. "Freedom of complete individuality is the inalienable right of every Negro bard".[1] Characteristics of Negro-dialect are as follows:

1. The vowel "a", pronounced "ah", often precedes a word or sometimes is added at the end, filling out a melodic phrase, intensifying a bit of rhythmic emphasis, or softening and binding together in that fluency demanded by the Negro ear, the sterner syllables of the English tongue.

2. In their rhymed words of the common verses they show a decided habit of making all final consonants silent. Thus mind, ground, surround, hand, understand, land, sold, told, long, friend, wind, world, kind, are common examples; they are generally pronounced without the final consonant, though not always. While "d" is most commonly silenced, others are muted in proportion to their frequency of occurence, Thus the final "g" in running, dropping, hanging, and all present participles, is not sounded at all; the same is true of nouns and adjectives ending in this letter. More before, door, floor, and sure are pronounced mo', befo', do', flo', sho', Fire-fier, like-lak, from-frum, last and past--las' and pas', don't-doan, Lord-Lawd, and Layrd, dead-daid, and-an', to-ter, of-uv, uf, O', for,fer, this-dis, with-wid, been-bin, there-dere, them-dem, these-dese, the-de, just-jus' and jes, because-'cause, declare-'clare, enough-'nuf, about-'bout, your-yo', unbelieving,-unbelievin', was-wuz.

1. Hare, M.C.--Negro Musicians and Their Music

3. Colloquial forms of verbs--you'd, you're, he'll, they'll, I'll, I'm, can't, ain't, wouldn't, couldn't, don't, etc.

4. Have, in the perfect tense with would, should and could is usually "a": "I would a done this; "I would a come through". But it is sometimes 'er, as in "If I had 'er died when I was young, I never would a had dis risk to run".

5. So before the present participle and in qualifying words to make a simple rhythm, "a" is not infrequently inserted. "My father died a-shoutin' an' I'm goin' to die a-shoutin' too". "Ezekiel said, "he spied the train a-comin'".

6. The use of the double negative.[1]

The 'perpetual consciousness' of the African is discussed by Mr. Laubenstein for further explanation of the Negro dialectic peculiarities.

Like primitive peoples everywhere the African untouched by European influence lives his life predominantly upon the plane of his sense impressions. Corresponding to his acceptance of appearances as real is the immediacy of his emotional reactions to his sense impressions. To recognize that the consciousness of the African villager concerns itself with percepts rather than with more generalized concepts, and with the affective and the volitional rather than the reflective and the speculative is to take the first necessary step toward understanding the native African genius and its various products especially his language.

1. Dubois-- Souls of Black Folk

The perpetual nature of the African's consciousness is reflected in those dialects which have not yet passed beyond the early isolated stage to the agglutinative and inflected types of language. Here the primitive mind is not able to grasp in one mental act a manifold of qualities, functions, etc., and bundle them all up implicitly and neatly into one word which immutably serves as a generalized conceptual summary of that whole class. Rather must it split the individual thing into its separate perceptual components and run them together explicitly as beads on a string. H. H. Johnson and Carl Meinhof instance the native practice of naming a thing in terms of its uses or its most striking qualities, and of dissecting every verb implying a composite act into the separate phases of the action. Hence the sum of qualities, functions, etc., indicated to the Occidental by the one word pencil for this African becomes "stone-write-thing"; kitchen becomes "some-thing cook place"; nail becomes "iron-head-broad". To express the idea, "He gave the child a pencil", the native would refer first to the "taking" of the pencil, and then to the "handing" of it to the child. The same disjunctive tendency is seen in the larger grouping of words into sentences. "They are bad people who kill; we fear them becomes "They-these, they person, they bad, they who kill--we fear them"; or the "The tree falls; dost thou see it?" becomes "This tree this here-fall; thou this seest?" (In the face of this common repetition of the demonstrative pronoun in obedience to perpetual demands, is the American Negro's fondness for "dis yere" to be wondered at?)

The result of this tendency is a certain bulkiness in sentence structure and in language, not incompatible with fluency. It is the price the African pays for his vivid impressionism.

The Bantu dialects are rich in descriptive adverbs. For the African to "think" is to see and to draw a mental picture, to hear sounds and to become vocal, to perceive muscular contractions and to move about, to feel emotion and to express it. Miss Kingsley describes the Bantu as thinking externally in a loud voice rather than internally. The African bushman draws large drafts upon life for the satisfaction of his auditory motor, and his effective consciousness. "Those drafts receive payment, among other ways, in his perception of meanings in sound and rhythm, of which the white man is utterly ignorant, in his susceptibility to music, rhythm and dance, and in his prevailing animism. Highly conceptual speech and the logical reasoning of the Occidental would not be sufficiently representative of or related to, his vivid perpetual consciousness for him to assign the important place to them in the scheme of things as does the former. His visions have to do with real things and with real people; his "voices" can have only a personal source, motion can also be only a mark of sentient life."[1]

"Thus the Negro brought with him a linguistic fluidity and a verbal individualism common enough in Africa, but puzzling to the whites whereby to words or even to nonsense sounds, temporary, local or occasional meanings are attached,

1. Laubenstein--Race Values in Afro-American Music

which the "wise" and those made wise alone henceforth understand. "Non-sense verses are not to be evaluated by the standard of logical coherence (that is merely a mental mannerism of Occidentals) but in the light of the original experience for which by common consent it is agreed, sounds shall henceforth stand as the perpetual label to recall or suggest the experience or concomitant consciousness. Preference, of course, was always given to a pleasing succession of sounds, having an appealing lilt or rhythm.[1]"

1. Laubenstein--Race Values in Afro-American Music

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

5. From this study it is evident that the American Negro was indebted to both his native African and American environments for his vast wealth of song material. The influence of one is no greater than the other; both proving to be very potent factors in the development of the Negro songs. The foregoing discussion has pointed out the contributions that each have made, the summary being here given in the following table:

-SUMMARY

BACKGROUND OF SONGS	AFRICAN INFLUENCES	AMERICAN INFLUENCES
SHOUT--a dance from which the folksong originated.	Traced to Louisiana where modified African dances were found.	Such dances were toned down under the influence of Protestanism, specifically the Methodists and Baptists. Representatives instructed the slaves religiously and educationally, resulting in the production of their songs.
Creation of the Negro Folksong.	Actual tunes used were brought with the Negroes from Africa; and the custom of 'musicalizing" life's experiences was also prevalent there.	The Negroes' own religious meetings were established in which they were allowed to express themselves freely, in their own way; the Bible and hymn proving to be great sources for the production of their songs.
Musical Characteristics -Melodic Tendencies- Major Scale Variations 1. Lack of the fourth and seventh tones, a common feature of the pentatonic scale. 2. Sharp third and fourth.	1. The pentatonic scale is prevalent in African music--a possible explanation of the leaning of the Negro toward it. 2. Considered common in all folk music.	1. Another possibility, contact of the Negro with Indian and Scottish music on the Southern Plantations.

Minor Scale Variations 1. Presence of leading tone or major seventh. 2. Omission of sixth and the raising of the sixth to a major interval without disturbing the seventh. 3. The raised fourth inferring the so-called Oriental scale.	2. Contrary to European way of dealing with the sixth in minor; possibly common to the musically uneducated. 3. Retained from their native African home; or derived from the intermingling of the forbears of the slaves with the peoples of Western Asia.	1. The leading tone shows the influence of the European system.
Harmonic Sense of the Negro	The existence of polyphony in South African music accounts for the Negroes' natural instinct for polyphony in America.	By emulating the white man's harmonic methods, Negroes developed a flair for the extemporaneous harmonizing of his melodies.
Modal Characteristics The bulk of the Negro folksongs were found to be in the major mode.	Cheerful music tended to lighten and hasten the labor of the Negro in America, likewise found true of the natives of Africa.	The encouragement of this attitude was also considered beneficial by the slave-owners.
Rhythmical Characteristics 1. Syncopation in a prominent feature of the songs	It is contained in African music therefore a possible inheritance of the American Negroes.	Being a characteristic of Scottish music there is also a likelihood that the Negroes found a constant reminder of it in the music to which they were exposed on the plantation.

Religious Characteristics	The African religious heritage of the Negro is greatly responsible for his easy acceptance of the Christian faith in America.	The spirituals, being religious in nature, are definitely based on the Bible--which was utilized freely.
Secular Characteristics Composed of work and labor songs.	The practice of the Negro to sing at work is inborn; a racial trait common to his African kinsmen.	
Poetic Characteristics	The dialectic peculiarities of the Negro in his attempt to master the English language were found to be governed by linguistic practice in Africa.	

Thus it is seen from this table, that the Negro drew greatly on these two sources for the creation of the spirituals.

In conclusion it is interesting to note the progress that the Negro folksongs have made, from their humble beginnings, on the many Southern Plantations, to the present day.

The Negro folksongs were first introduced to the public by the Fisk University "Jubilee Singers" under the direction of the Rev. Geo. White. Many other schools followed the example of Fisk University, namely: Tuskegee Institute, Atlanta University, and Hampton Institute. They also contributed much to the growth of the songs.

The beauty of the spirituals was thus revealed to the

world at large by these various groups of singers, in addition to the societies organized for the preservation of them. But they were unknown as solos on the concert stage until the composer Harry T. Burleigh, arranged a number of them for this purpose with piano accompaniment. From time to time, Mr. Burleigh issued additional groups until he awakened a new interest in the melodies. Not only did he know the idiom of the songs , and the idioms manifested therein, but his excellence as a singer and composer enabled him to produce works of art while not destroying the traditional mood of the songs. Along with Mr. Burleigh was a group of talented colored composers working toward the same end: Nathaniel Dett, Carl Ditson, J. Rosamond Johnson, H. Clark Smith, Coleridge Taylor, and Clarence Cameron White.

Further aiding the cause, by the organization of choruses, thereby teaching them to sing these songs, were Mrs. Daisy Tapley, Mrs. Amelia Beckley and William C. Elkins.

The latest impulse given to the advancement of the spirituals has come within the last few years through their presentation to the public by colored singers; Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Miss Marian Anderson, and Julius Bledsoe, having brought them to their highest point of celebrity and placing the classic stamp on them.

Many white musicians have also aided in giving the songs the present recognition they now enjoy; they have made excellent arrangements for them. David Manners, long interested in Negro music was instrumental with Mrs. Natalie Curtis Burlin,

Mr. Eldridge Adams and others in founding a colored music school settlement in the Harlem section of New York City. The poet, Clement Wood, for several years gave lectures on the spirituals illustrated by piano and voice.[1]

Thus it has been through the influence of these interested writers and musicians, as well as others, that the spirituals have stood the test of time. Hoping to aid in an even keener appreciation of the songs is the aim of this thesis.

The following poem is here given, in which Mr. J. Weldon Johnson voiced his estimate and appreciation of the Negro spirituals--celebrating the unknown black bards who created them:[2]

O Black and Unknown Bards

O black and unknown bards of long ago
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?
How, in your darkness, did you come to know
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?
Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes?
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,
Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?

Heart of what slave poured out such melody
As "Steal away to Jesus"? On its strains
His spirits must have nightly floated free,
Though still about his hands he felt his chains.
Who heard great "Jordan roll"? Whose starward eye
Saw chariot "swing low"? and who was he
That breathed that comforting, melodic sigh,
"Nobody knows de trouble I see"?

What merely living Clod, what captive thing,
Could up toward God through all its darkness grope,
And find within its deadened heart to sing
These songs of sorrow, love and faith, and hope?
How did it catch that subtle undertone,
That note in music heard not with the ears?
How sound the elusive reed so seldom blown,
Which stirs the soul or melts the heart to tears?

1. Burleigh, H.T.--The Book of American Spirituals
2. Ibid

O Black and Unknown Bards, con't'd.

Not that great German master in his dream
Of harmonies that thundered amongst the stars
At the creation, ever heard a theme
Nobler than "Go down, Moses." Mark its bars,
How like a mighty trumpet call they stir
The blood. Such are the notes that men have sung
Going to valorous deeds; such tones there were
That helped make history when time was young.

There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,
That from degraded rest and servile toil
The fiery spirit of the seer should call
These simple children of the sun and soil.
O Black slave singers, gone forgot, unfamed,
You--you alone, of all the long, long line
Of those who've sung taught, unknown, unnamed,
Have stretched out upward, seeking the devine.

You sang not deeds of heroes or of kings:
No chant of bloody war, no exulting paean
Of arms-won triumphs; but your humble strings
You touched in chord with music empyrean.
You sang far better than you knew; the songs
That for your listeners' hungry hearts sufficed
Still live,--but more than this to you belongs:
You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ.

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